DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 149 373 CS 203 896

AUTHOR Karolides, Nicholas J., Ed.
TITLE Books for Children and Adolescents: Issues and Images.
INSTITUTION Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English.
PUB DATE Jan 78
NOTE 41p.; The Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English is an affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English ; Type is small throughout
JOURNAL CIT Wisconsin English Journal; v20 n2 Entire Issue Jan 1978

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adolescent Literature; Censorship; *Childrens Literature; Elementary Secondary Education; *English Instruction; Handicapped Children; *Literary Criticism; Literary Perspective; *Literature Appreciation; *Reading Materials; Values

ABSTRACT

The articles in this journal discuss several themes and issues that arise in the teaching of adolescent and children's literature. Topics concerned with the adolescent include a discussion of same-sex relationships in the contemporary novel and the parent image as presented in current literature. In children's literature, books about handicapped children are considered. Other articles deal with values clarification in adolescent literature, student taste versus the study of classic literature, and censorship. The journal also provides an adolescent book list, organized according to theme, and a section containing book and record reviews. (MAI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Editor, Dr. Nicholas J. Karolides
University of Wisconsin-River Falls, WI 54022

Wisconsin English Journal

ED149373

VOLUME XX JANUARY, 1978 NUMBER 2

Contents of This Issue

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS: ISSUES AND IMAGES

Move Over MacBeth, Here Comes the Pigman! 2
Donald J. Pattow, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Adolescent Literature and Value Clarification: A Warning 5
G. Melvin Hipps, Furman University, Greenville, South Carolina

Adolescent Fiction - Whys, Hows, & Whose or Ways to Break the TV Junkie 10
Mary Jordan Meiser, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

NCTE Achievement Awards, 1977 18

New Versions of an Old Genre: Books About Handicapped Children 20
Linda Western, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

The Trouble With Parents 23
Nicholas J. Karolides, University of Wisconsin-River Falls

Same-Sex Relationships in the Contemporary Novel for Adolescents 26
Virginia L. Wolf, University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie

Poem: hailstorms 32
Mark Bruner (student), University of Wisconsin-River Falls

Seven Recent Questions and Seven Old Answers About Censorship 33
Ken Donelson, Arizona State University, Tempe

Books for Children and Adolescents 35

© Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English, 1978

The **Wisconsin English Journal** is published three times annually in October, January, and April by the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53233. Subscription rate is $5.00 per year for individuals not members of the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English, $5.00 per year for public and private libraries, curriculum centers and similar professional offices. In matters of question, the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English reserves the right to determine which subscription rate applies. Single copy $1.75. Postage is prepaid on all subscriptions mailed within the United States and territories and possessions, and all other countries in the same scale of postage rates. Remittances should be made payable to the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English by check, money order, or bank draft. All business communications regarding advertising, subscriptions and orders as well as all manuscripts and correspondence referring to the editorial content of the **Wisconsin English Journal** should be addressed to Dr. Nicholas J. Karolides, Wisconsin State University, River Falls, Wisconsin 54022.

CS203896

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND TO USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

MOVE OVER *MACBETH*, HERE COMES *THE PIGMAN!*

DONALD J. PATTOW
University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point

The conflict over the use of adolescent literature in the classroom has been raging ever since literature written expressly for adolescents first appeared a little more than half a century ago. This paper will focus on that conflict, looking at both sides, highlighting the major battles, and trying to answer the ultimate question of any war--who won?

As in any war, people fight on the same side for various reasons and with different attitudes. The most hostile attitude toward adolescent literature is that it should not be used either in or out of the classroom, that it is "trash," corrupting youth and leading ultimately to a national decline in the quality of life itself.[1]

This extreme view is not prevalent today since even those objecting to the use of adolescent literature in the classroom agree that "the junior novel has become an established institution."[2] The objectors feel that adolescent literature can be used for such tasks as outside reading,[3] remedial reading,[4] and help for the slow-reader.[5]

Though the objectors are vocal and have a cultural arsenal behind them in the form of college entrance reading lists[6] and other traditional resorts, they are not nearly as numerous or influential as those advocating, for whatever reason, the use of adolescent literature. The objectors' influence has also been hampered by the fact that there has been no research, significant or otherwise, supporting the contention that adolescent literature is not suitable for use in the classroom.

On the other hand, however, there is also very little evidence to support the many claims of those advocating the use of adolescent literature in the classroom. The reading ladder rationale, for example, has long been popular with those who see the primary function of adolescent literature as transitional literature,[7] shoving the student up the ladder of literary education.[8] The assumption here is that the process of climbing up the ladder will "establish lifelong reading habits in young people."[9] Not only is this claim unsupported by anything but personal testimony, but nowhere is there any questioning of the assumption that "getting kids started on a lifetime reading pattern"[10] is even a valid goal.

What little research has been done in the area of adolescent literature is behaviorist in orientation and utilitarian in application. Charles Brisbin, for example, in his study of the "Effects of Literature on Attitudes of Fifth Grade Students Toward Blacks,"[11] decided that "The power of literature to shape attitudes seems to be over-estimated."[12] Undaunted by his findings, however, Brisbin concluded that "true attitudinal change will require more extensive and intensive programs, possibly containing selected literature as one component."[13]

Unfortunately, results such as Brisbin's have not prevented others from claiming that, among other things, "the books we select play a key role in shaping children's social-ethical ideas and values."[14] On the contrary, the utilitarian argument for the use of adolescent literature in

the classroom has attracted an army of partisans and, given the present hue and cry for relevance and accountability, has mounted its attack by advocating primarily therapeutic goals.

These goals range from the rather vague notion of somehow changing "wrong thinking today" into "right thinking tomorrow,"[15] to such specific goals as how to manage life in a broken home,[16] what to do if you are caught in the middle of a love affair,[17] and how to cope with a father's rejection of a dwarf-son.[18] The goals, of course, are limited only by the number of problems adolescents might encounter and the literature that might be applicable to that problem; but as long as there are people who agree with Dwight Burton that "there are highly important connections between the personal problems of students and their study of literature,"[19] then those goals will be articulated and an attempt will be made to infiltrate them into the curriculum.[20]

The problem with this infiltration, as well as that of the others, is manifold. There has been very little research done in the use of adolescent literature (or any literature, for that matter) in or out of the classroom. And what research has been done has failed to support the utilitarian claims of those advocating the use of adolescent literature in the classroom. Also, the basic assumption that literature is a worthwhile experience is rarely challenged. The question asked is usually what *kind* of literature should be taught, whereas the question that should be asked is whether or not literature *should* be taught.

I would suggest that there are probably several reasons why few people who feel that "The study of literature must remain at the heart of the English curriculum in the secondary schools. . ."[21] question the intrinsic value of the study of literature. One obvious reason is that many people, especially those with utilitarian designs, agree with Plato that literature should not only be pleasant" but also useful to States."[22] These adherents, of course, are concerned primarily with the possible extrinsic value of the study of literature.

This concern with the extrinsic potentials of the study of literature, however, is not benign and should not be taken lightly. Whether adolescent literature is being used as a bridge, as therapy, or to instill values, the verb teach is being re-defined to include the verbs mold, form, shape, and, ultimately control. Thus it seems that Neil Postman might have been right when he said that "all educational practices are profoundly political in the sense that they are designed to produce one sort of human being rather than another. . . ."[23]

If Postman is right, as I believe he probably is, then the question of who is winning the conflict over the use of adolescent literature in the classroom takes on a much wider and profounder significance. Though there are several conscientious objectors in the battle over what literature should be taught and how it should be used,[24] most educators say that literature should elevate,[25] enrich,[26] humanize,[27] be significant.[28] Should we then exult in the statement that there is "a bright and promising future for the use of [adolescent] literature in the classroom."?[29] The statement does answer the original question of who won the war, but it also raises another question--who lost?

As in every war, there is usually a loser. In this conflict the loser is not so much those who argued against the use of adolescent literature in the classroom but the noncombatants over whom the battles were fought--the adolescents. The adolescents have lost not only because they

have had little say in the war but because they are more often than not the unwitting victims of those who would use literature as a hammer or a hoe, either "pounding sense" into students or attempting to "weed out" unpopular and unacceptable ideas.

This attempted manipulation of adolescents raises still more fundamental questions. Can we trust the adolescents' reading desires? Is there any reason why we should not? Does it make any difference what material is used in the classroom? If one objective of English education is to give students the tools necessary for independent aesthetic judgment of literature then should the criteria for text selection of literature be the highest *aesthetic* criteria consistent with a student's maturity and reading ability? Is there a need for goals in the classroom? It seems to me that these and other questions about both the nature of literature, teaching and the schools must be answered before teachers, administrators, and parents presume to use literature as a tool to manipulate what many see as the raw material of youth.

NOTES

[1]Wilson Follett, "Junior Model," *The Bookman* (September 1929), 12.

[2]Emma L. Patterson, "The Junior Novels and How They Grew," *English Journal*, VL (October 1956), 381.

[3]Ben F. Nelms, "Reading for Pleasure in Junior High School," *English Journal*, LV (September 1966), 680-681.

[4]Harvey R. Granite, "The Uses and Abuses of Junior Literature," *The Clearing House*, XXXXII (February 1968), 338.

[5]Patterson, p. 385.

[6]See the unpubl. diss. (Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison, 1969) by James Warren Olson, "The Nature of Literature Anthologies Used in the Teaching of High School English 1917-1957," p. 123.

[7]Berenice B. Beggs, "Present-Day Books Eclipse Alger Thrillers," *English Journal*, (November 1932), 728.

Dwight L. Burton, *Literature Study in the High Schools*, revised ed. (New York, 1964), p. 20.

Stephen Dunning, "Design for Outside Reading: A Context for Remembering," *School Review*, LXIX (Spring 1961), 31.

Robert C. Small, Jr., "Teaching the Junior Novel," *English Journal*, XLIV (February 1972), 222-223.

[8]G. Robert Carlsen, *Books and the Teen-Age Reader* (New York, 1971), p. 41.

[9]Elizabeth Rose, "Literature in Junior High," *English Journal*, XLIV (March, 1955), 142.

[10]Kenneth L. Donelson and Beverly A. Haley, "Adolescent Literature: You Mean that Garbage Written for Kids Who Can't Read?" *The Clearing House*, IV (March 1973), 442.

[11]See the unpubl. diss. (Wayne State Univ., 1971) by Charles Dan Brisbin, "An Experimental Application of the Galvanic Skin Response to the Measurement of Effects of Literature on Attitudes of Fifth Grade Students Toward Blacks," as reported in *Dissertation Abstracts International*, XXXII (11-A), 1972, 5994-5995.

[12]Brisbin, 5995-A.

[13]Brisbin, 5995-A.

Continued on page 9

ADOLESCENT LITERATURE AND VALUE CLARIFICATION
A WARNING

G. MELVIN HIPPS
Furman University, Greenville, South Carolina

The current emphasis on value clarification as a goal of education has given rise to some interesting but in my opinion questionable approaches to children's and adolescent literature. Of course objective analysis of values expressed in literature is not exactly an innovative exercise in literary criticism; but using literature in the classroom as a vehicle for value clarification is a fairly recent phenomenon. Aside from the obvious external risks of this technique, such as resistence from parents who do not want the values of their children tampered with, there are certain potential internal problems a teacher must recognize if he wishes to get into value clarification as a pedagogical tool.

The major problem in this approach is the tendency toward distortion of the literature and the consequent risk of lapsing into a kind of neo-moralizing. Let me illustrate my point first with an example from a traditional story from children's literature, "Jack and the Beanstalk." In 1974, the author of an article in *Elementary English* entitled "Children's Literature and Value Theory" made the following observations:

> The use of the value clarifying response in my second grade classroom (composed of "culturally deprived" members) opened new doors to me and my students. We had just completed reading Jack and the Beanstalk and had run through the usual reading skills exercises when I asked the children if they thought people should ever steal for any reason. Most of them up to this point had supported Jack who had been described as a "brave but poor boy." The resulting discussion indicated to me that these children were quite mature enough to handle such questions and in fact, had definite ideas and attitudes to express.[1]

Now I realize the problems many legends, folk stories, fairy tales may present in terms of values. As we know, editors concerned about the moral implications of traditional stories frequently make revisions in an attempt to ameliorate what they consider to be unfortunate moral lapses. For example, in one version of "Jack and the Beanstalk," the giant is said to have stolen the hen, the magic harp, and the bag of gold from Jack's family so that Jack, rather than stealing from the giant, is simply claiming what is rightfully his. Of course, even in this version of the story, Jack does kill the giant, a fact that could be said to illustrate that homicide rates higher than stealing on a scale of morality.

All of these problems notwithstanding, the literary problem posed by the teacher's exercise in value clarification is that it distorts the story by making Jack the moral villain and the giant a semi-sympathetic character. Without the archetypal underdog hero to cheer on to victory, against overwhelming odds, over the archetypal evil giant, I am not sure "Jack and the Beanstalk" offers much in the way of a literary experience. My objection, furthermore, has nothing to do with whether children have sufficient maturity to deal with the question of stealing. It concerns rather the violation of point of view and the author's intention that a discussion of stealing would involve. In short, to turn this little story into a homily against stealing seems to me not only to distort it but to place an unfair burden upon it. I have an idea that the teacher in this instance, if she had wanted to deal with the morality of thievery, would

have done better to treat the subject in a non-literary context or else to choose a story in which stealing is a real moral issue. Certainly I hope no teacher would feel compelled to bring up the question of stealing in relation to "Jack and the Beanstalk" because he feared the story would otherwise be a bad influence on children. I trust children to differentiate between stealing candy from the local candy store and taking a magical hen from a mythical giant.

Now I am not saying that "Jack and the Beanstalk" presents no opportunities for value clarification. One traditional value (at least one widely held by parents) the story violates is that children are supposed to obey their parents. Jack not only disobeys his mother by trading the cow for beans rather than selling it, but he prospers as a result of exercising his independent judgment. I am certain that such an inference drawn from the story, even in the name of value clarification, would bring several swift resolutions from the P.T.A. Frankly, "Jack and the Beanstalk" is no more concerned with disobeying parents than it is with stealing, but the former point does preserve Jack as the unambiguous hero in the story, a literary point I consider worth preserving if one is going to teach this story. Many stories have main characters who have clearly defined strengths and weaknesses. "Jack and the Beanstalk" is not one of these stories.

The McGuffey readers were intentionally moralistic. They set out to teach the virtues of honesty, truthfulness, industriousness, and patriotism. The danger, it seems to me, is that nowadays teachers may confuse value clarification with value indoctrination and that value clarification through literature might become merely riding a hobby horse. Some people who would doubtless pooh-pooh moralistic presentations of traditional virtues have a tendency to deal, if not moralistically, at least single-mindedly with more current social issues, such as ecology, political morality, and the roles of women and minorities. In the February, 1975, issue of *English Journal*, an article entitled "The Double Standard in Adolescent Novels" decries the portrayal of female adolescents in adolescent novels as silly, shallow people who "are acted upon and are unable to stand up to their own values."[2] The author concludes that "adolescent fiction is not meeting the needs of adolescent women,"[3] and yet her discussion is based on five novels she says are most commonly read by her eleventh and twelfth grade women students. I suppose one is to conclude that the women are reading these novels, even though the books do not meet their needs, because they have no alternatives. Furthermore, the poor women apparently do not know the novels are not meeting their needs until teacher tells them so. The conclusion of this article is that we need more adolescent novels with non-stereotyped heroines. In fact, it ends with the query, "Why not a *Catcher in the Rye* with a heroine?"[4] Certainly there is nothing wrong with an objective critical article on the stereotyping of females in adolescent fiction, but if a teacher deals with these books in class primarily from the point of view of their inadequate portrayal of women, he runs the risk of distorting the books in the interest of "clarifying" students' values in relationship to the roles of women. In fairness to the author of this article, I must admit that she makes no such pedagogical suggestions. However, if one finds himself squarely in conflict with the values expressed or implied in a book, it may be extremely difficult to lead students in an objective exploration of these values. If a teacher decides to deal with the subject of the characterization of a female character, he might ask, "Do you like or dislike her? Do you agree or disagree with the way she handles her problems? Would you like to be like her?" If one asks such questions, however, with pre-conceived notions about what the answers should be, he will find it difficult to refrain from lapsing into value indoctrination.

I realize that authors are products of their social conditioning, but I do not believe any serious author would set out to write a story about stereotyped or unstereotyped females; at least I hope not. If an author has a limited view of experience, I presume his audience will likewise be limited. The genesis of a good novel is not the black experience or the adolescent experience, or the feminine experience or the drug experience or the unwed parent experience but rather the human experience. When a good writer writes honestly about real people and real experiences, he will have an audience. If he writes about the way women or blacks or young people should view themselves and the world, he is likely to come up with a propagandistic tract full of stereotypes instead of a novel. I am quite well aware of the social and political uses of literature and of the feeling of many teachers that any methods are appropriate to compensate for past wrongs and present injustices. Such feelings, if we aren't careful, can lead to absurdities like banning *Huckleberry Finn* because Jim is a slave and is referred to as "Nigger Jim."

Does our literature shape our values, or does our literature merely reflect our values? Both, I suspect, but I doubt that our values are shaped to any great extent by literature produced for the purpose of shaping our values. One of the reasons we have had such difficulty winning acceptance for adolescent literature is that too often adolescent books have been written by those who have an axe to grind or who are attempting to make up for the lack of novels about particular themes or groups or characters. We then wind up with a bunch of books on some topic that remind one of the multiple spin-offs of certain television shows. Hark back to the days when publishers of adolescent books had books written by committees. Such a committee nowadays might begin with the premise that what young readers need, in the words of the advice once given Richard Peck by a librarian, is a book about "a black adolescent unwed father on a Honda."[5]

Another article in the February, 1975, *English Journal* deals with the subject of values in adolescent literature. This one concerns the stereotyping of boys rather than girls. Entitled "The Cult of Kill in Adolescent Fiction," it develops the thesis that in books like *The Yearling, Old Yeller, A Day No Pigs Would Die, Call It Courage,* and *Shadow of A Bull* boys are initiated into manhood by the killing of an animal. That is the objective thesis. The subjective thesis is that reading such books condition boys to the idea that violence and killing constitute the definition of manhood and that killing animals is "hardly consistent with the ecological revolution of our age."[6] (There's something about hitting Marjorie Rawlings and Armstrong Sperry with an anti-ecology rap that strikes me as roughly equivalent to criticizing the Beowulf poet for the inferior status of women in the mead-hall society.) The pedagogical thesis of the article is "That we, as teachers, can help students perceive and judge attitudes and values presented in literature."[7] My thesis is that a teacher who teaches the novels mentioned above in order to demonstrate their moral shortcomings, rather than to help students perceive and judge for themselves the attitudes and values, is moralizing and distorting the literature.

There are several problems in this article. For one thing, there is no recognition of the symbolic nature of literature. Jody did not become a man in *The Yearling* by killing the deer but by experiencing the loss of something he loved. The pattern of loss, not the particular thing or person lost, is the central idea in many adolescent stories. The article, however, seems to reason that killing an animal is what actually defines manhood in the books she discusses, rather than the experience of loss or

the courageous facing of grave danger. Literature must of course be about something specific. What more appropriate symbol could there be for loss for an adolescent than the loss of a pet? And of course, the killing of a wild animal, when it is a matter of survival rather than sport, is an archetypal pattern which reaches back to the very origin of human experience and thus of literary experience. Certainly, there are other ways than the killing of animals of presenting the idea of loss and the idea of survival in the face of evil or danger. For adolescents, however, these ideas must ordinarily be presented in physical as well as psychological terms. The possibilities for physical conflicts are not unlimited. A teacher should of course teach something about archetypal patterns, but he should teach some discrimination in analyzing the various ways an archetypal pattern is handled.

Another problem in the article is the author's tendency to misinterpret the literature in her zeal to prove her point. For example, in her discussion of *A Day No Pigs Would Die*, she says

> We presume the reader is also supposed to be amused (the characters are) at the weazeling of the dog, until the weazel is dead and the poor dog so brutally injured that it is necessary to shoot him. All this time the men enjoy the activity with the delight of a bear-baiting contest.[8]

My reading of this incident in the novel is just the opposite. During the fight between the dog and the weazel, Rob says

> To be honest, I thought a fight between a dog and a weazel was going to be a real excitement. But I hated every second of it. The whole thing seemed senseless to me and I was mad at myself for standing there to hold down the barrel lid. I even felt the shame of being a part of it. From the look on Papa's face I could see that maybe he wasn't enjoying it so much either.[9]

The boy and his father do not enjoy this experience. Rather they completely abhor it. Rob insists that the injured dog be put out of its misery, and his father agrees.

Finally, the article suggests that young boys, having been reared on the unspeakable violence in *The Yearling* and *A Day No Pigs Would Die*, become violent men who perceive all evil as being external to themselves. This might be so if one's literary experience were limited to books which portray violence and which suggest that evil is always external to ourselves. The mature person, however, and thus the mature reader, sees conflict and evil as being at times internal and at times external; and when a particular book presents an external conflict, it may be meant to be viewed as symbolic of our internal conflict.

In this discussion, I have not meant to disparage the use of literature in value clarification in the classroom. Indeed, if literature is ever to have a significant impact on young people, it must engage them in a serious consideration of their attitudes, feelings, and values. Nor have I meant to suggest that we should relent in our efforts to locate and teach books that illustrate a range of values, characters, and situations. But anytime a teacher goes beyond an objective analysis of the values and issues in books, he runs the risk of distorting the literature, of moralizing, of riding a hobby horse, in short of engaging in indoctrination rather than education. Leading students to identify and to clarify and perhaps in the process to change their values is a legitimate goal of education. Leading them simply to adopt the teacher's values is an ever-present danger.

NOTES

[1]Mahala Cox, "Children's Literature and Value Theory," *Elementary English*, 51 (March 1974), 356.

[2]Gayle Nelson, "The Double Standard in Adolescent Novels," *English Journal*, 64 (February 1975), 54.

[3]Ibid., 55. [4]Ibid.

[5]Richard Peck, "In the Country of Teenage Fiction," *American Libraries*, 4 (April 1973), 204.

[6]Jean McClure Kelty, "The Cult of Kill in Adolescent Fiction," *English Journal*, 64 (February 1975), 57.

[7]Ibid. [8]Ibid.

[9]Robert Peck, *A Day No Pigs Would Die* (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1972), p. 103.

Move Over Macbeth:
Continued from page 4

[14]David C. McClelland, "Values in Popular Literature for Children," *Childhood Education*, XL (November 1963), 138.

[15]Phyllis A. Whitney, *Writing Juvenile Fiction* (Boston, 1960), p. 3.

[16]Beverly Haley, "The Fractured Family in Adolescent Literature," *English Journal*, LXIII (February 1974), 70-72.

[17]G. Robert Carlsen, "Education for Life Adjustment Through English," in *Education for Life Adjustment*, ed. Harl R. Douglass (New York, 1950), pp. 88-109.

[18]Austin L. Porterfield, *Mirror for Adjustment* (Fort Worth, 1967), p. 239.

[19]Burton, p. 59.

[20]Burton has a chapter on "Social Problems and the Literature Program," pp. 87-108.

[21]Burton, v.

[22]Plato, *The Republic*, trans, B. Jowett (New York, no date), p. 379.

[23]Neil Postman, "The Politics of Reading," *Harvard Educational Review*, XL (May 1970), 244.

[24]May Hill Arbuthnot, "The Purpose and Place of Literature in the Curriculum," *Childhood Education*, XII (October 1935), 22. Donelson and Haley, p. 443. Eunice McGuire, "Student Involvement in English Curriculum Planning," *School Review*, LXXIX (May 1971), 423. J.M. Stephens, *The Process of Schooling* (New York, 1967), p. 117.

[25]*Freedom and Discipline in English*, p. 49.

[26]Burton, p. 1.

[27]John J. Deboer, "What Shall We Teach in High-School English," *School Review*, LXVII (Autumn 1959), 312.

[28]Miles, p. 173.

[29]Geraldine E. LaRocque, "A Bright and Promising Future for Adolescent Literature," *Arizona English Bulletin*, XIV (April 1972), 9.

ADOLESCENT FICTION – WHYS, HOWS, & WHOSE or WAYS TO BREAK THE TV JUNKIE

MARY JORDAN MEISER
University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire

Through the use of an extensive bibliography in adolescent fiction (and help from an equally subversive librarian), the secondary teacher can construct reading units, on an individual or on a classroom basis, which will enforce the basic skills of critical reading, writing with purpose, and encourage a habit of reading for pleasure.

The "Whys" seem so evident in this automated, TV-oriented, frazzle-paced society, yet there is a need to re-state the reasons from the adolescent's perspective. We as adults are prone to be judgmental in regard to their literature, many regarding it as non-literature; it is, however, communication all the same and we owe it to them to take inventory of it - and ourselves as well.

Adolescent fiction is indeed communication, for problems are worked out and discussed on book level and the adolescent can thus discuss what may be in reality a personal dilemma and a private matter. The topics of this fiction deal with what the kids want and we should be familiar with and concerned about those wants - which books are torn to shreds, passed around, and why? Many of them may not be "great literature" but how important is that on an individual reading level? Can not the teacher direct to quality in class and out if he is familiar with the books? We may not like some of the books, but the kids do, and some of these books become "great literature" to them for the simple reason that their primary interest is themselves and the somewhat touchy subject of "How Am I Growing Up?"

And there is a controversy among adults regarding this fiction on that topic. Some parents, teachers, and administrators think students should not read books with sex, swearing, smoking, drugs (and take note how sex is grouped with all the negatives) and all such doings although they have been shown the correlation between reading it and doing it is not a positive one. In most cases, traditional values are stressed and those characters who go against them end badly in any event. Other adults feel the books are still too pollyanna-ish; they deal with these controversial subjects and them cop out with a happy, tidy ending or end with *A* solution, simply a 1950's retread. Yet others say the youngsters are saturated with too much realism and need an escape into the fantasy worlds or the everything's OK worlds. Perhaps a balance?

The fact remains: an adolescent's most overpowering interest is himself and how to grow up, and that necessarily involves subjects such as sexuality, alcohol and other drugs, and relationships with parents, siblings, and peers. The reality of that fact also remains: pre-marital sex, teenage alcoholism, drug addiction, divorce, death, loneliness, and mental illness. Many adolescents have gross misconceptions of these topics as well as a feeling of futility in coping with their own anxieties, frustrations, questions, and failures; they often feel uniquely alone. Through reading, they may approach and face problems; thus, the problems and treatment thereof should be realistic rather than trivial and miraculous.

Some problems may indeed seem trivial to us - we're past them - but the distress to the adolescent is real. They are concerned with and often embarrassed about body changes, thus the popularity of Judy Blume's books which deal in a light manner with bust measurements, window peeking on the shapely girl next door, and reading dirty books in closets. Sex, however, is not really trivial nor is it a four letter word. Societal pressure created an early need for handling the subject and whether we like it or not, we must face it. The facts of reproduction can be covered in a couple of lectures, but the larger goal of helping a teen to develop an understanding of his emotions and attitudes requires more; a health text is not sufficient whereas fiction can be endless and invaluable. Do you know what materials to hand the 14 year old boy who is asking quite seriously if masterbation is normal? Do you know what to give the girl whose sister at age 16 has managed to bear an illegitimate child, space out on drugs most of the time, and is currently dating an ex-convict? Do you know which books might aid the junior high school students whose parents were called because someone falsely accused them of a sexual encounter in the school bushes?

But the sexual aspect is just one of many. Of equal importance to the adolescent is the understanding of, the coping with, relationships. It becomes a relief to him to know that he is not alone! In print, the adolescent might see that generation gaps are commonplace and his need for emotional independence is the catalyst to clashes. He may face the breaking of relationships within a home through divorce or he may note that siblings may or may not get along well; more importantly, he may find out why. He may see himself in relation to his peers and vicariously work out approaches for handling his feelings which seem to change at will and often without control.

Another concern which may be handled through this fiction is the negation of attitudes imparted by television. What color are the bad guys? What nationalities are stupid? How deep is the violence? How shallow are the emotions? How do you lead a youngster into sensitivity for the feelings of others? How do you prepare him for the multiplicity of experience outside the confines of a narrow community? How do you instruct him that the ends do not justify the means? Perhaps thoughtful reading offers one means.

Your primary concern, regardless, will always return to the individual student. You can guide this youngster toward reading related to him and his concerns as *he* sees them; he may gain a perspective, i.e., he is like others. The problem, to be sure, is still there but he may now feel better about himself. We all tend to deal with conflicts better if we do not feel weird! The reading may suggest alternatives - some we may view as poor, e.g., withdrawal or the use of something or someone to achieve status - but with enough directed reading he may accept the limits and recognize the potentials. If the student can identify with characters who reject unacceptable mechanisms, he can find models and he can hope. The advantage of the reading is the frankness it allows. The student who might reluctantly blurt out his problems under duress may discuss with confidence the character's problems, flaws, stupidity, and go on to suggest how he might have done better. And you as the teacher can set up his reading so that he has the opportunity to evaluate the character's given response and to test himself in the process. You know students; know their fiction.

From these "Whys" to the application, the "Hows." One approach to the masses of fiction available is to group it thematically. It is an immediate

means for you to direct the reading to an individual or to a group, and it is the most visible means of attracting a student to his particular interest.

I used this approach with junior high school students in a self-contained classroom situation located in an environment very rural. English, and all that goes with it, was not remotely related to the environment and thus held in little regard. My students were generally addicted to TV or their favorite horse, and a book was a foreign object to be viewed with suspicion. However, after endless hours of reading current fiction, consulting with a librarian who offered funds rather than tea with her sympathy, and delighting in the subversive growth of materials stacked in my own classroom, I saw survival through the perils of the northern winter, the Wisconsin Death Trip! I saw kids read through book after book and ask for more. I saw kids develop an awareness of prejudice, of mental and physical illness, of others, of themselves. I saw growth.

The logistics of administering this system is simple once you have eaten away hours in the preparation of guidelines to the theme in general and the books in particular and in the preparation of specific guide sheets (assignment schedules, materials to be used, questions to be dealt with, manners of testing, composition assignments, oral assignments, etc.) and whatever else may be of use in making the student as independent as possible. Once one explains the content and the student makes his choices, the books are given out and a file card is made out to note what materials he is currently using. The file card becomes a handy reference to the student's progress as well as a library check on the books out.

Built into this system is a wide range of language skills - a time to read, a time to research, a time to discuss, a time to write - along with the element of some decision-making and the consequence of work or non-work by one's own hand. Of equal importance is the ability to discuss one's decisions and one's work with thought, validity, and an eye to question.

Although I used this as a separate unit following compulsory work on linguistics, mechanics, usage, and the introduction of literary techniques, it is possible to use this unit all year by transforming it into a book report format. Have an individual conference with the student and consider a certain theme or topic and ask the student to write out a statement of what he wishes to do with his outside reading. What is it he wishes to explore? Set up several questions to be answered and a tentative bibliography. In another conference discuss the books he will read and request a statement or outline that refines his intent in reading, e.g., causes of tension in a home, qualities of friendship, treatment of a racial problem. His report can give a *short* summary of the plot and then a more lengthy explanation of what the student has gained in terms of his goal questions. In his use of several books, he will necessarily compare and contrast the theme.

Through the book report, you can direct students through a multiplicity of books with a multiplicity of writing assignments which will cover nearly every writing technique.

Illustration: a character has a desire which leads into conflict - write a paragraph on this desire and explain it through specific details and events which support your ideas.

Process: some character may go through "a process" or some process may be presented in the story - trace and explain it - e.g., maturation

Cause & Effect: this often looms large in adolescent fiction - explain in terms of the character's actions - (How would some character act in a given situation? Set up a situation and explain. - this could be a logical variation on the same writing technique.)

Comparison/Contrast: between two books on the same theme - between two characters in the same book or in different books

Description: a character sketch - description of many traits or focus on one outstanding trait

Summary/Review: give a brief summary of plot and comment on it - believable or not believable, characters realistic, dialogue natural, hold your interest, etc. etc.

Persuasion: convince your reader to agree with your statements on a theme or an idea presented in this book

Opinion: what will stick with you from this book - what is most effective and why? - use details and events to support your idea
-pick a quote from the story - attack or defend it
-characters usually make decisions and act upon them - how do you feel about some character's decision - wise, unwise, etc.?

Interview: what would you ask this character -- or author?

News Story: pick some incident in the plot and re-write it

Literary Essays: set up criteria for writing on character, setting, plot, theme, point of view, etc.

And now to the "Whose," the bibliography itself. The books have of necessity been arbitrarily grouped as to general subject and/or theme in an effort to provide a quick reference. Obviously, there is overlap as most of the novels deal with several areas. The marking of an asterisk next to the book indicates one of particular quality or high interest, i.e., my subjectiveness and that of many former students! The major thrust is grade levels 7-10; however, most classes exhibit a wide range of reading levels and the bibliography may be applicable above and below those grades.

A READING LIST IN ADOLESCENT FICTION

ETHNIC/PREJUDICE

Armstrong, William. SOUNDER. Harper 69 (Negro)*
Neufeld, John. EDGAR ALLEN. Signet (Negro) * 1968
Marshall, James. WALKABOUT. Belmont 69 (Aborigine)
Miller, Ruth. THE CITY ROSE. McGraw-Hill 77 (Negro)
Hunt, Irene. WILLIAM. Scribners 77 (Negro)
Taylor, Mildred. ROLL OF THUNDER, HEAR MY CRY. Dial 76 (Negro)
Randall, F.R. THE ALMOST YEAR (Negro) Scholastic 75
Graham, Lorenz. RETURN TO SOUTHTOWN. Crowell 76 (Negro)
Childress, Alice. A HERO AIN'T NOTHING BUT A SANDWICH. (Negro) Avon 73
Jones, Adrienne. SO, NOTHING IS FOREVER. Houghton 74 (Negro)

Cone, Molly. NUMBER FOUR. Houghton 71 (Indian)*
Benchley, Nathanial. ONLY EARTH AND SKY LAST FOREVER. Harper 72 (Indian)*
O'Dell, Scott. SING DOWN THE MOON. Houghton 70 (Indian) Houghton Mifflin 74
_____. CHILD OF FIRE. (Chicano)
_____. ZIA. Houghton 76 (Indian)
Bonham, Frank. CHIEF. (Indian) Dell 73
Baylor, Byrd. YES IS BETTER THAN NO. Scribners 77 (Indian)
Yep, Laurence. CHILD OF THE OWL. Harper 77 (Oriental)
Bennett, Jay. MASKS: A LOVE STORY. Watts 71 (Oriental)
Dixon, Paige. PROMISES TO KEEP. Atheneum (Oriental)
Epstein, Anne. GOOD STONES. Houghton 77 (Indian)

Speare, Elizabeth. THE WITCH OF BLACKBIRD POND. Dell 58
Hinton, Susan E. THE OUTSIDERS. Dell 67 (Social Class)*

WAR/PREJUDICE

Graham, Gail. CROSSFIRE. Pantheon 72 (Vietnam)**
Wiesel, Elie. NIGHT. Avon 69 (W.W.II-Jewish)*
Berri, Claude. THE TWO OF US. (W.W.II-Jewish)*
Greene, Bette. SUMMER OF MY GERMAN SOLDIER. Dial 73 (W.W.II America)**
Dank, Milton, THE DANGEROUS GAME. Lippincott 77 (W.W.II Underground)
Cummings, Betty Sue. HEW AGAINST THE GRAIN. Atheneum 77 (Civil War)
Evenhuis, Gertie. WHAT ABOUT ME? Nelson 76 (W.W.II - Holland)
Rydberg, Lou & Ernie. THE SHADOW ARMY. Nelson 76 (W.W.II - Crete)
Westall, Robert. THE MACHINE GUNNERS. Greenwillows 76 (W.W.II-Crete)
Ginsberg, Mirra. DIARY OF NINA KOSTERINA. Avon 68 (W.W.II-Russia)
Arnthony, Christine. I'M 15 AND I DON'T WANT TO DIE. (W.W.II-Hungary)
Tunis, John. HIS ENEMY, HIS FRIEND. Avon 67 (W.W.II-France)
Foreman, James. HIS ENEMY, HIS BROTHER. Scholastic 69 (Jewish-Arab)
Walsh, Jill. FIREWEED. Avon (W.W.II-England) 1969
Degens, T. TRANSPORT 7-41R. Viking. (W.W.II-England) Viking 74
Suhl, Yuri. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GATE. Watts 75 (W.W.II-Poland)
Van Stockum, Hilda. THE BORROWED HOUSE. Farrar 75 (W.W.II-Holland)

MENTAL/PHYSICAL HANDICAPS

Platt, Kin. HEY DUMMY. Chilton 71 (Retardation)*
Neufeld, John. LISA BRIGHT AND DARK (Emotional illness)* Signet 70
Carlson, Dale. TRIPLE BOY. Atheneum 77 (Schizophrenic)
Smith, Gene. THE HAYBURNER. Delecorte (Retardation) Dell 75
Koob, Theodora. THE DEEP SEARCH. Lippincott 69 (Retardation)
Cocoran, Barbara. AXE-TIME, SWORD-TIME. Atheneum 76 (Some brain damage)
Platt, Kin. THE BOY WHO COULD MAKE HIMSELF DISAPPEAR. (Speech Defect) Dell 71
Greenberg, Joanne. IN THIS SIGN. (Deafness) Avon 72
Byars, Betsy. THE SUMMER OF THE SWANS. (Retardation)* Avon 74
Butler, Beverly. LIGHT A SINGLE CANDLE. (Blindness) Archway 71
Keyes, Daniel. FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON (CHARLEY) (Retardation)* Bantam 70
Bauer, Marion. FOSTER CHILD. Seabury 77 (Emotional Illness)
McGraw, Eloise. A REALLY WEIRD SUMMER. Atheneum 77 (Stress)
Bach, Alice. A FATHER EVERY FEW YEARS. Harper 77 (Hemophilia)
Goldreich, Gloria. SEASON OF DISCOVERY. Nelson 77 (Retardation)
Cunningham, Julia. COME TO THE EDGE. Pantheon 77 (Loneliness)
Terris, Susan. THE DROWNING BOY. Doubleday. (Autistic) 72
Blume, Judy. DEENIE. Bradbury (Spinal Deformity) Bradbury 73
Branfield, John. WHY ME? Harper (Diabetic) 73
Windsor, Patricia. THE SUMMER BEFORE. Harper 73 (Nervous Breakdown)
Sherburne, Zoa. WHY HAVE THE BIRDS STOPPED SINGING? (Epileptic) Dell 76
Mathis, Sharon. LISTEN FOR THE FIG TREE. Viking (Blindness) 74
Neufeld, John. TOUCHING. Phillips 70 (Physical Handicap)
Cleaver, Vera & Bill. ME TOO. Lippencott 73 (Retardation)
Dygard, Thomas. RUNNING SCARED. Morrow 77 (Fear-sports related)
Spencer. CRY OF THE WOLF. Westminster 77 (Paralysis)
Rodowsky, Colby. WHAT ABOUT ME? Watts 76 (Mongoloid)

DRUGS

Wojciechoska, Maia. TUNED OUT. Dell 68*
Kerr, M.E. DINKY HOCKER SHOOTS SMACK.* Dell 73
Hinton, Susan. THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW. Viking 71
Butterworth, W.E. THE NARC. Four Winds 72
Eyerly, Jeanette. ESCAPE FROM NOWHERE. Berkley 69
Coles, Robert. THE GRASS PIPE. Little, Brown 69
Benton, John. CARMEN. Bantam 70
Kingman, Lee. THE PETER PAN BAG. Houghton 70
Chaber, M.E. THE ACID NIGHTMARE. Holt 67
Smith, Doris. UP AND OVER. Morrow 70

ALCOHOL

Corcoran, Barbara. MAKE NO SOUND. Atheneum 77
Snyder, Anne. MY NAME IS DAVY: I'M AN ALCOHOLIC. Holt 77
O'Hanlon, Jacklyn. FAIR GAME. Dial 76
Carlson, Dale. TRIPLE BOY. Atheneum 77
Palmer, Bernard. MY SON, MY SON. Moody 1970
Zindel, Paul. PARDON ME, YOU'RE STEPPING ON MY EYEBALL. Harper 76
Neville, Emily. GARDEN OF BROKEN GLASS. Delecorte 75
Snyder, Anne. FIRST STEP. Holt 75
Brancato, Robin. SOMETHING LEFT TO LOSE. Knopf 76
Trivers. I CAN STOP ANYTIME I WANT TO. Prentice-Hall 74
Angier, Bradford & Corcoran, Barbara. ASK FOR LOVE AND THEY GIVE YOU RICE PUDDING. Houghton 76

SEXUALITY

Hunt, Irene. WILLIAM. Scribners 76 (Premarital Pregnancy)
O'Hanlon, J. FAIR GAME. Dial 76
Peck, Richard. ARE YOU THERE IN THE HOUSE ALONE. Viking 76 (Rape)
Dizenzo, Patricia. PHOEBE. Bantam 70 (Premarital Pregnancy)*
Terris, Susan. A PLAGUE OF FROGS. Doubleday (Premarital Pregnancy) 73
Sherburne, Zoa. TOO BAD ABOUT THE HAINES GIRL. (premarital Pregnancy) Morrow 67
Eyerly, Jeanette. A GIRL LIKE ME. (Premarital Sex & Pregnancy) Berkley 70
_____. BONNIE JO, GO HOME. (Abortion) Bantam 73
Zindel, Paul. MY DARLING, MY HAMBURGER. (Premarital Sex) Bantam 71
_____. I NEVER LOVED YOUR MIND. (Premarital Sex) Harper & Row 70
Head, Ann. MR. AND MRS. BO JO JONES. (Pregnancy and Teen Marriage)* Signet 68
Stirling, Nora. YOU WOULD IF YOU LOVED ME. (Premarital Sex) Avon 74
Hall, Lynn. STICKS AND STONES. (Homosexuality) Dell 72
Holland, Isabelle. THE MAN WITHOUT A FACE. (Hint of Homosexuality) Dell 77
Donovan, John. I'LL GET THERE. IT BETTER BE WORTH THE TRIP. (Homosexuality) Harper 69
Eyerly, Jeanette. HE'S MY BABY NOW. Lippincott 76 (Unwed Father)

DEATH

Glaser, Diane. THE DIARY OF TRILBY FROST. Holiday 76
Greene, Constance. BEAT THE TURTLE DRUM. Viking 76
Lowry, Lois. A SUMMER TO DIE. Houghton 77
Stolz, Mary. EDGE OF NEXT YEAR. Harper 74
Gardam, Jane. THE SUMMER AFTER THE FUNERAL. Macmillan 71
Holland, Isabelle. OF LOVE AND DEATH AND OTHER JOURNEYS Dell 77
Feagles, Anita. THE YEAR THE DREAMS CAME BACK. Atheneum. 76
Dixon, Paige. MAY I CROSS YOUR GOLDEN RIVER. Farrar 75
Beckman, Gunnel. ADMISSION TO THE FEAST. Holt, Rinehart & Winston 72
Klein, Norma. SUNSHINE. Avon 74
Lee, Mildred. FOG. Seabury 72
Peck, Richard. A DAY NO PIGS WOULD DIE.* Dell 74
Arundel, Honor. THE BLANKET WORD. Nelson 73
Lee, Virginia. THE MAGIC MOTH. Seabury 72
Stolz, Mary. BY THE HIGHWAY HOME. Harper & Row 71
Zindel, Paul. PARDON ME, YOU'RE STEPPING ON MY EYEBALL. Harper 76

CHILD ABUSE

Sachs, Marilyn. A DECEMBER TALE. Doubleday 76
Roberts, Willo. DON'T HURT LAURIE. Atheneum 76
Holland, Isabelle. ALAN AND THE ANIMAL KINGDOM. Lippincott 77
Hunt, Irene. THE LOTTERY ROSE. Scribner's 76

FEMINIST

Mazer, Norma. DEAR BILL, REMEMBER ME? & OTHER STORIES. Delecorte 76
Wersba, Barbara. TUNES FOR A SMALL HARMONICA: A NOVEL. Harper 76
Bauer, Marion. SHELTER FROM THE WIND. Seabury 76

DIVORCE/REMARRIAGE - CHILD/ADULT RELATIONSHIPS

Wood, Phyllis. WIN ME AND YOU LOSE. Westminster 77
Greene, Constance. THE UNMAKING OF RABBIT. Viking 72
Engebreth, P.A. UNDER THE HAYSTACK. Dell 75
Platt, Kin. CHLORIS AND THE CREEPS. Chilton 73
_____. CHLORIS AND THE FREAKS. Bradbury 75
Holland, Isabelle. HEADS YOU WIN, TAILS I LOSE. Lippincott 73
Bradbury, Bianca. THOSE TRAVER KIDS. Houghton 72
Klein, Norma. TAKING SIDES. Avon 76
_____. MOM, THE WOLFMAN, AND ME. Avon 74
Blume, Judy. IT'S NOT THE END OF THE WORLD. Bradbury 72
Brooke, Jerome. UNCLE MIKE'S BOY. Harper Row 73
Cunningham, Julia. DORP DEAD. Avon 74
Eyerly, Jeanette. THE PHAEDRA COMPLEX. Lippincott 71
_____. THE WORLD OF ELLEN MARCH. Lippincott 64
Arundel, Honor. THE HIGH HOUSE. Scholastic 74
Walsh, Jill. GOLDENGROVE. Avon 73
Peck, Richard, DON'T LOOK AND IT WON'T HURT. Holt, Rinehart & Winston 72
Fox, Paula. BLOWFISH LIVE IN THE SEA. Bradbury 70
Cameron, Eleanor. TO THE GREEN MOUNTAINS. Dutton 75
Peusner, Stella. A SMART KID LIKE YOU. Seabury 74
Wolitzer, Hilma. OUT OF LOVE. Farrar Strauss 76
McGraw, Eloise. A REALLY WEIRD SUMMER. Atheneum 77

FRIENDSHIPS (stressed as such)

Singer, Marilyn. NO APPLESAUCE, PLEASE. Dutton 76
Kingman, Lee. BREAK A LEG, BETSY MAYBE. Houghton 76
Hall, Lynn. FLOWERS OF ANGER. Follett 76

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Branscum, Robbie. THE SAVING OF P.S. Doubleday 77
Richard, Adrienne. INTO THE ROAD. Atlantic-Little 76
Byars, Betsy. THE PINBALLS. Harper 77
Mazer, Norma & Harry. THE SOLID GOLD KID. Delecorte 76
Colman, Hila. SOMETIMES I DON'T LOVE MY MOTHER. Morrow 77
Greene, Constance. GETTING NOWHERE. Viking 77
Neufeld, John. EDGAR ALLEN. * Signet 68
Cleaver, Vera & Bill. WHERE THE LILIES BLOOM.* Signet 74
Wersba, Barbara. RUN SOFTLY, GO FAST. Bantam 72
Stolz, Mary. LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP. Dell 73
Arundel, Honor. A FAMILY FAILING. Nelson 72
Peck, Richard. A DAY NO PIGS WOULD DIE.* Dell 74
Greene, Bette. SUMMER OF MY GERMAN SOLDIER.* Dial 73
Pfeffer, Susan. THE BEAUTY QUEEN. Doubleday 74
Mazer, Harry. THE DOLLAR MAN. Delecorte 74
Mazer, Norma. A FIGURE OF SPEECH. Delecorte 73
Mazer, Harry. GUY LENNY. Delecorte 71
Ames, Mildred. IS THERE LIFE ON A PLASTIC PLANET? Dutton 75
_____. WITHOUT HATS, WHO CAN TELL THE GOOD GUYS? Dutton 76
Fitzhugh, Louise. NOBODY'S FAMILY IS GOING TO CHANGE. Farrar, Strauss 77
Cameron, Eleanor. TO THE GREEN MOUNTAINS. Dutton. 76
Bradbury, Bianca. IN HER FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS. Houghton Mifflin 76
Corcoran, Barbara. AXE-TIME, SWORD-TIME. Atheneum 76
Jones, Adrienne. SO, NOTHING IS FOREVER. Houghton 74
Bradbury, Bianca. BOY ON THE RUN. Seabury 75
Mathis, Sharon. THE HUNDRED PENNY BOX. Viking 75
Zindel, Paul. THE PIGMAN.* Harper & Row 68
Hinton, Susan. THE OUTSIDERS.* Dell 69
Miles, Betty. THE REAL ME. Knopf 74
Feagles, Anita. THE YEAR THE DREAMS CAME BACK. Atheneum 76

MATURATION/YOUTH IDENTITY

Blume, Judy. ARE YOU THERE, GOD? IT'S ME MARGARET. Dial 70*
_____. THEN AGAIN MAYBE I WON'T. Dell 73
_____. BLUBBER. Dell 74
_____. STARRING SALLY J. FREEDMAN AS HERSELF. Bradbury 77
Wells, Rosemary. THE FOG COMES ON LITTLE CAT FEET. Dial 72*
Hall, Lynn. THE SEIGE OF SILENT HENRY. Follet. 72*
Lyle, Katie. I WILL GO BAREFOOT ALL SUMMER FOR YOU. Dell 73
Neville, Emily. IT'S LIKE THIS CAT. Scholastic 63
Lee, Mildred. THE SKATING RINK. Dell 69
Konigsburg, E.L. FROM THE MIXED UP FILES OF MRS. BASIL FRANKWEILER. Atheneum 67*
Kerr, M.E. IF I LOVE YOU, AM I TRAPPED FOREVER? Harper & Row 73
_____. THE SON OF SOMEONE FAMOUS. Ballentine 75
_____. I'LL LOVE YOU WHEN YOU'RE MORE LIKE ME. Harper 77
Banks, Lynne. MY DARLING VILLAIN. Harper 77
Farry, Charles. O ZEBRON FALLS. Houghton 77
Murphy, Barbara. NO PLACE TO RUN. Bradbury 77
Cormier, Robert. THE CHOCOLATE WAR. Pantheon 74* (Advanced)
_____. I AM THE CHEESE. Pantheon 77* (Advanced)
Roth, Arthur. THE SECRET LOVER OF ELMTREE. Four Winds 76 (Adoption)
Wersba, Barbara. THE DREAMWATCHER. Atheneum 69
Zindel, Paul. THE PIGMAN.* Harper & Row 68
Donovan, John. REMOVE PROTECTIVE COATING A LITTLE AT A TIME. Harper 73
Peck, Richard. A DAY NO PIGS WOULD DIE. Knopf 73*
Greene, Constance. LEO THE LIONESS. Dell 74
Bennett, Jay. DEATHMAN DO NOT FOLLOW ME. Hawthorne 68
Goffstein, M.B. THE UNDERSIDE OF THE LEAF. Farrar 72
Cone, Molly. YOU CAN'T MAKE ME IF I DON'T WANT TO. Houghton Mifflin 71
Lee, Mildred. SYCAMORE YEAR. Signet 76
_____. FOG. Seabury 72
Barry, B.J. JUST DON'T BUG ME. Follett 71
Huntsbury, William. THE BIG WHEELS. Lothrop 67
Hamilton, Virginia. ZEELY. Collier 67
_____. THE PLANET OF JUNIOR BROWN. Macmillan 71
Jordan, June. HIS OWN WHERE. Dell 71
Hall, Lynn. GENTLY TOUCH THE MILKWEED. Avon 77
Van Leeuwen, Jean. I WAS A 98 POUND DUCKLING. Dial 72
Harris, Christie. CONFESSIONS OF A TOE-HANGER
Gilbert, Nan. THE UNCHOSEN. Harper & Row 73
Shore, June. SUMMER STORM. Abington Press 77
Bradbury, Bianca. "I'M VINNY, I'M ME." Houghton 76
Langton, Jane. PAPER CHAINS. Harper 76
Distad, Audree. THE DREAM RUNNER. Harper 77
Wilkerson, Brenda. LUDELL AND WILLIE. Harper 77
Le Guin, Ursula. VERY FAR AWAY FROM ANYWHERE ELSE. Atheneum 76
Cleaver, Vera & Bill. TRIAL VALLEY. Lippincott 77
Wells, Rosemary. LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE. Dial 77
McKay, Robert. BORDY. Nelson 77
Rahe, Berniece. THE GIRL WHO HAD NO NAME. Dutton 77
LeRoy, Gen. HOTHEADS. Harper 76
Lipsyte, Robert. THAT ONE SUMMER. Harper 76
Shaw, Richard. THE HARD WAY HOME. Nelson 77
Harris, Marilyn. THE RUNAWAY'S DIARY. Four Winds 71
Heide, Florence. GROWING UP ANYWAY. Lippincott 76
_____. WHEN THE SAD ONES COME TO STAY. Lippincott 75
Byars, Betsy. THE TV KID. Viking 76
Shura, M.F. THE SEASON OF SILENCE. Atheneum 76
Greene, Bette. PHILIP HALL LIKES ME, I RECKON MAYBE. Dial 74
Greene, Constance. THE EARS OF LOUIS. Viking 74
Moser, Don. A HEART TO THE HAWKS. Atheneum 75
Danziger, Paula. THE CAT ATE MY GYMSUIT.* Dell 75
Walsh, Jill. UNLEAVING. Farrar 76
Hinton, S.E. THE OUTSIDERS* Dell 69
Smith, Doris. UP AND OVER. Morrow 76
Angier & Corcoran. ASK FOR LOVE AND THEY GIVE YOU RICE PUDDING. Houghton 76

NCTE Achievement Awards, 1977

CATHERINE ANN BROWNLEE, ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL, KENOSHA
Catherine has lettered in varsity tennis and basketball, as well as being president of the National Honor Society and Girls J. Club. A Badger Girls State delegate, Catherine is also a high school All-American in basketball. She plans a career in advertising.

KATHRYN JOANN CAWKINS, PARKVIEW HIGH SCHOOL, ORFORDVILLE

PIA F. CUNEO, DOMINICAN HIGH SCHOOL, MILWAUKEE
Pia is involved in forensics, having received an A in state competition, and the National Honor Society. She has received an award for excellence in German Language Study. Pia's other interests include piano and ballet dancing. She plans to pursue a career as a physician.

CAROLINE M. CYNCOR, BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL
Caroline participates in forensics, debate, music and drama. She has received awards in forensics, scholarships in music and a National Merit Scholarship Commendation. She plans to be a teacher for the deaf.

ANN C. EASTHAM, APPLETON HIGH SCHOOL WEST
Ann, a member of the Fox Valley Youth Symphony, has received two Wisconsin Junior Academy Poetry Awards. She plans a career as a biological research scientist.

JUDITH A. HERMAN, WAUWATOSA EAST HIGH SCHOOL
Active in student government, the literary magazine and newspaper, the National Honor Society, and the math society, Judith is a National Merit Scholarship Semi-finalist. Her vocational interests lie in writing, urban planning and political science.

BRIAN S. HERRLE, OSHKOSH NORTH HIGH SCHOOL
Brian is very active in drama, athletics (wrestling and baseball), student government, Key Club, and sports broadcasting. A National Merit Scholarship Commended Student and Badger Boys State Delegate, Brian has also received awards in wrestling and government. His career plans: civil engineering and, possibly, law.

BROWNLEE

CUNEO

CYNCOR

EASTHAM

HERRLE

ELIZABETH ANN HILL, GALE-ETTRICK-TREMPEALEAU HIGH SCHOOL
Elizabeth, a National Merit Scholarship Commended Student, has been an officer in the Drama Club, National Honor Society, 4-H, and Library Club. She has also participated in volleyball and track. She plans to teach elementary school.

SCOTT B. JORGENSON, OSHKOSH WEST HIGH SCHOOL

BRENDA LEE KESSER, WASHINGTON PARK HIGH SCHOOL, RACINE
Brenda's activities include French Club, free lance writing for the school paper, tennis and volleyball, as well as part-time work. She has won awards in French and Spanish. Brenda plans a career in French and other languages, interpreting or translating.

NICHOLAS BURKE KLETTI, LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL, MANITOWOC
A PSAT commended student, Nicholas's activities include piano, soccer, bicycling, and cross-country skiing. He is a member of the National Honor Society, Chess Club, Math Club, and Student Senate.

KAREN A. LOEBEL, SOUTH MILWAUKEE HIGH SCHOOL
Karen has been involved in student government, debate, National Honor Society, yearbook staff, and various church activities. She has been the recipient of awards in debate, student government, foreign language, and 4-H leadership. She plans a career in law.

HILL

KESSER

KLETTI

LOEBEL

MUEHRER

PETER MUEHRER, OSHKOSH NORTH HIGH SCHOOL
A National Merit Semi-finalist, Pete is the co-editor of the student literary magazine, and has had leading roles in drama productions. He is active in band and a folk singing group as well as holding a part-time job. Pete plans a career in architecture.

DAVID SATOLA, BROOKFIELD EAST HIGH SCHOOL
Awarded an A.F.S. International Scholarship for a summer in South Africa, David has also been active in Key Club International, Student Council, American Guild Service, and the school musical. He plans a career in law and the diplomatic service.

LESLIE SCHULTZ, APPLETON HIGH SCHOOL WEST
Leslie is involved in *Orchesis* and as an editor/author for a literary magazine. Leslie, currently a college student, is studying English and history education.

SUSAN SOMMER, RHINELANDER HIGH SCHOOL
Susan, a National Honor Society member, counts journalism, drama, forensics, debate, and music among her interests. She has been editor of the school newspaper, and active in the swim and drama clubs. Susan plans to major in journalism.

SATOLA

SCHULTZ

SOMMER

THOMPSON

YETTER

LAUREL ANN THOMPSON, WASHINGTON PARK HIGH SCHOOL, RACINE
Laurel is a member of several choir groups, language clubs, and the track team. She has received a Citizenship Award, Scholastic Honors, Runner of the Year, All-County Track team, and the UW-Whitewater Award for Excellence in Foreign Languages. She plans a career as a translator-interpreter.

LEWANE CHARLES YETTER, JR., ST. CROIX FALLS HIGH SCHOOL
LeWane, a winner of the National Merit Scholarship Commended Student Award, is a member of the National Honors Society and the National Forensics League. He has won letters in wrestling and track and has been active in drama, forbate, and choir. Vocational plans: physicist and novelist.

NEW VERSIONS OF AN OLD GENRE: BOOKS ABOUT HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

LINDA WESTERN
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Children's books in the 1700's were frequently didactic tracts aimed at instructing children in Puritan religious beliefs, their instruction veiled only thinly in story form. We may be amazed at the lack of subtlety in these early books and congratulate ourselves that children's literature has come a long way since then. But has it? In some ways, of course, it has. The notion that children's books should be written to entertain, not necessarily instruct, has been held by many writers from Lewis Carroll to William Steig. Writers such as E. B. White, Paula Fox, and Mildred Taylor have shown that it is possible to write children's books about death, slavery, and bigotry without condescension. And writers such as June Jordan, Alice Childress and Virginia Hamilton have used rather sophisticated narrative techniques in some of their books for children. But these developments notwithstanding, the didactic tradition is far from dead. The causes have changed over the years, but a message-orientation continues to dominate many books. However praiseworthy the moral impetus for such writing may be, it has resulted in new versions of an old genre--stories that are neither good fiction nor good nonfiction, but rather an unsatisfactory blend of both. An examination of several books dealing with handicapped children, all published within the last three years, should reveal this.

In *A Button in Her Ear,* Angela tells us that she didn't always have a "button in her ear" (i.e., a hearing aid) and that perhaps no one would have discovered ner need for a "button" if it hadn't been for the muttering of her friend, Buzzie. Then, through four contrived situations, we learn how Angela has misunderstood what others say. For example, she thinks that Buzzie says "Throw me the ball" instead of "Throw it to Paul." Her misunderstanding costs her baseball team a victory. Her mother eventually discovers that Angela is not hearing properly and takes Angela to her pediatrician, who in turn refers her to an audiologist. The audiologist confirms her hearing loss. The narrative then shifts to a more formal tone as Angela tells how her hearing aid works. It shifts back to a light tone as the ever-smiling Angela returns to her classroom friends with her new hearing aid. Only at one point in the story does Angela confess that she is worried. In fact, she suspects that many of her friends would like at least to try a hearing aid, too. *A Button in Her Ear* is a pseudo-story. The characters are flat, the plot is as contrived as instances in a sermon, and the whole thing is cloaked in sentimental reassurances that would be out of place in a good nonfictional treatment of Angela's hearing problem.

I Have A Sister, My Sister Is Deaf is also narrated by a child, this time by the sister of a child with a profound hearing loss. Here there is almost no story. Instead, the reader is given a rather long list of the things that the deaf child can or cannot do. For example: "My sister can play the piano. She likes to feel the deep rumbling chords. But she will never be able to sing. She cannot hear the tune." The list is randomly organized and sometimes confusing (for example, in one instance the deaf child mistakes the word "pajamas" for "bananas;" in context, it is unclear whether her error comes from failure to lip read correctly or from not hearing correctly). We learn very little of the unnamed deaf child.

Her feelings are interpreted only through the words of her sister. Her difficulties and accomplishments, given the list format, make her appear more as a curiosity than a person. The illustrations give her the appearance of a mongoloid. Is this depiction intentional or accidental? We haven't a clue.

According to its forward, *Rachel* was "produced to encourage disabled children, their families and schools. . . . It is also intended to show to others some of the problems that face the handicapped." Narrated in first person, it tells of Rachel's activities and accomplishments. Rachel's problems can only be inferred; they are never stated or shown either in text or illustrations, with the possible exception that Rachel tells us that she is unable to get on the school bus. Here, as in *I Have A Sister, My Sister Is Deaf,* the text resembles a list, a list with little continuity --Rachel goes to school, helps set the table for tea, goes to Brownies, swims, etc. What sort of person is Rachel? Did she have any difficulty learning to do all these things? Does she ever have a bad day? Apparently not, for in the illustrations she never loses her smile. We are never informed of a particular problem as we would be in a piece of good nonfiction. We see only superficialities. Nor do we see a specific problem artistically revealed through fiction: Rachel is a flat character participating in a random variety of activities.

He's My Brother and *My Brother Steven is Retarded* both are told by a sibling of a handicapped child. In *He's My Brother* the handicapped child apparently has a learning disability, although it is difficult to learn from the text how severe the disability is (he has difficulty in school, in learning to tie his shoes, etc., yet he plays checkers). Here too, the text reads like a list--a list of the unnamed boy's accomplishments and problems. In a discussion of the book on the last page, the author and his wife state, "We hope this book will enable other Jamies and their families to identify with the experiences shown and take comfort." But because the boy is never developed as a character, it would be difficult to "identify" with him, and there is little to take comfort in unless the old adage "misery likes company" can be applied. *My Brother Steven Is Retarded* is also narrated by a sibling, this time Steven's sister. Illustrated by photographs, the list-like text tells us little of Steven's handicaps; it focuses on his sister's responses to them and how they affect her. For example, she tells us that she "guesses" she loves Steven, but that he is hard to love. He doesn't look like other children. He makes funny noises and "sort of talks funny." He is clumsy and he breaks things. She adds that she gets angry at Steven, especially when she has to clean up after him, but then she feels bad because "it's not his fault his brain was hurt." Here, too, Steven is shown more as a curiosity than a real person. Nor is his sister presented as an interesting, particular person. She is simply the sister-of-the-boy-with-a-problem.

The above five books share a number of features. In three, the sibling of the handicapped child narrates the text. The personal narrative style appears to be each author's attempt to depict the narrator and the handicapped child as real, sympathetic characters. Yet the list format of each book detracts from the attempt at characterization and, of course, fails to sustain any action. In all three we learn only that problems exist and that some ramifications of the problems are exemplified in the listed episodes. As a result, the stories are neither interesting fiction nor well written informative accounts.

In *Rachel* and *A Button in Her Ear,* the handicapped child narrates. While healthy acceptance of a handicap is a worthwhile goal, both narratives are so uniformly merry in tone as to become unbelievable.

Neither informative nonfiction nor interesting fiction, cause books of this sort fall short of artistic and pedagogical standards. Far better are two alternate approaches, one clearly in the genre of nonfiction, the other in fiction.

Bernard Wolf has created three photojournalistic documentaries for elementary age children: *Don't Feel Sorry for Paul,* about a six-year-old deaf girl. The texts, although somewhat wordy, clearly discuss the problems and accomplishments of the three subjects. The photographs capture their varying moods. They are not mere curiosities. There is no attempt to create a fictional narrator or a shallow story. Thus Wolf avoids the pitfalls of mixing genres; he informs us about the lives of three real people with specific problems.

It is difficult to find examples of ficiton, particularly for young children, that deal successfully with handicapped characters in stories where we are shown and not told how the character thinks, acts, feels and copes. *Father's Arcane Daughter,* by E. L. Konigsburg, most appropriate for children in grades 5-7, however, is successful in presenting a handicapped character who alternately fails and succeeds within the context of a suspenseful plot. We see Heidi (Hilary) as a hearing impaired, lisping and limping child, sheltered (or perhaps hidden) by her mother. She matures into a corporate executive. Konigsburg need not tell us, in list form, of Heidi's problems or her brother's responses to them--they are implicit in the plot. Heidi's accomplishments and her later success are not set out as "pat" reassurances; in fact Konigsburg uses them as slowly unfolding clues to the resolution of the mystery which is central to the book. Konigsburg does not fall into the trap of telling us exactly how Heidi lip reads, or what kind of batteries are used to operate her specially devised telephone. Her story doesn't require the relaying of that information, and Konigsburg holds to the limits her story sets for her.

Publication of good books about the handicapped is a worthwhile goal, but the current wave of "fictional nonfiction," so obviously written to make information palatable, so similar in structure and tone to its didactic forerunners, falls short of the goal. We need good books clearly in one genre or the other to satisfy our separate requirements for literature and instruction.

CONFERENCE ON ENGLISH EDUCATION CONVENTION

March 16-18, Radisson Hotel, Minneapolis

The 1978 CEE convention includes 70 sessions on topics such as teaching literature, writing, language, reading, drama, film; the "back-to-the-basics" movement; assessment and accountability; defining the English curriculum; inservice methods for English teachers; research in English education; alternative teaching methods; teacher morale; public relations; teacher centers; and other topics of interest to English teachers, administrators, curriculum coordinators, and teacher trainers. The convention begins on Thursday afternoon with special workshop sessions; regular sessions begin Friday morning and run through Saturday morning.

Main speakers:

Keynote address (Thursday evening): Maxine Greene, Teachers College, Columbia, speaking on a philosophy for language arts in the 1980's

Friday breakfast speech: Rexford Brown, National Assessment for Educational Progress, speaking on literacy and accountability

Saturday luncheon speech: Donald Murray, of New Hampshire, speaking on composition instruction and teacher education in writing methods

For further information about the convention and registration, write to: CEE Convention, NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801

THE TROUBLE WITH PARENTS

NICHOLAS J. KAROLIDES
University of Wisconsin, River Falls

It is certainly not news that in the last decade or two, books for adolescents have changed remarkably. These changes, some quite overt, others subtle, have drawn applause from critics, teachers and readers for their introduction of reality. In place of sugar-coated fantasy and ephemeral concerns, we have significant social and personal issues and problems: identity, alienation, pre-marital pregnancy, brutality, mental illness, drugs, homosexuality, and a host of comparable topics. In our reactions to these seemingly positive developments--a whiff of reality goes a long way after the hothouse atmosphere--we may have overlooked a curious and, I believe, significant pattern within these novels. I refer to the portrayal of parents.

Listen to this conversation from the 1969 novel *I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth The Trip* by John Donovan (p. 158).

> "I guess some day we'll be old, like our parents," I say.
> "I hope not like my parents," Altschuler says.
> "Me too." I laugh. "My mother, she's really something. I can never tell whether she's going to be my big buddy or a regular witch. She's either slobbering all over me or ready to boot me out of the house. How she feels depends on liquor mostly."

Or this revelation from the hero in Kim Platt's 1968 novel, *The Boy Who Could Make Himself Disappear:* (p. 181).

> "Well, she (i.e., his mother) used to save up all the food I didn't eat the whole week. And then one day, fuh a big suhprize, she would cook it up again and make me eat it. And I would eat it but it was so watten I hadda throw it up--on the plate. And then--and then she would make me eat it up again--I mean--" he hesitated, "--*everything*. All that gook!"

And this one from *Songs My Mother Taught Me* by Audrey Thomas (1973) (p. 78).

> But the worst Christmas of all was the year she tore the ornaments off the Christmas tree that night (Why did she do it, Isobel? I can't remember), crushed them under her heel, scattered the turkey carcass, wrenching it apart, outside in the backyard in the darkness.
>
> "This is what I think of your Christmas! This is what I think of your goddam Merry Christmas." Smashing a coffee cup against the kitchen wall.
>
> "What's the matter with you now?"
>
> "No! You wouldn't know, would you? Or those two spoiled brats of yours. I work" (smash) "and I slave" (smash) "and nobody so much as raises a finger to help me."

Before scrutinizing those books more closely, a backwards glance is necessary for the sake of comparison. Back in the halcyon days of the 1940's and '50's parents in the adolescent novel were generally inconspicuous, one-or-two-dimensional characters, operating in the background of the plot. They were usually tangential to the action and effectively out-of-touch with the basic issues represented, perhaps in keeping with the adolescent's surge of independence and self-actualization, his imminent break from parental control and his apparent concern for peer relationships. From

this pattern of parental regression emerges ar image. A few examples will illustrate.

Written in 1943, du Jardin's *Practically Seventeen* expresses one phase of this portrayal. The parents, introduced in the first chapter as "pretty old, both in their forties," are still identified as fairly modern. The father has a "corny" sense of humor, made much of, and is sort of "around" and helpful. Time and again he is pictured as reacting mildly to various crises and providing, at critical moments, surprise solutions--like the much-needed new formal for the big dance. The mother, sweet, sincere, a little fluttery, is equally thoughtful and understanding; in addition to advice she provides the ever-present chocolate cake. In the words of the heroine, they're "swell," and she is occasionally contrite that she misuses their trust.

Cleary's *Fifteen* (1956) projects a comparable portrait, though this heroine's parents are initially an embarrassment to her with their inconvenient questions and requirements, and their seeming old-fashioned, unsophisticated tastes. But she learns they're quite acceptable. They are essentially concerned about her welfare and development, she recognizes, and they barely handicap her.

A slight twist to this pattern is provided by two other big authors of this period, Cavanna and Stolz. *Going on Sixteen* (1946) and *Ready or Not* (1953) offer one-parent homes, fathers in both cases. Not quite carbon copies of each other, these men are concerned but very busy, respectively keeping up with farm tasks or holding down two jobs to make ends meet. It is clear to the reader that they are not indifferent to their daughters' needs but lack certain skills and sensitivities to fully counsel them. Another Stolz heroine in *A Sea Gull Woke Me* escapes an over-protective mother with the help of a sympathetic, but usually dominated father to a summer job away from home where she gains personal strength and confidence as well as understanding of her mother.

Books with male central characters present parents taken from essentially the same mold, though they sometimes have a slightly stronger presence. Jim Kjelgaard's hero of several books, *Big Red, Irish Red,* etc., (1945, 1957) operates around his widowed father who though capable and knowledgeable is getting on in years, and is rather accident prone. Thus Danny, though guided, is generally on his own, discovering his capacities and testing values and skills. Comparably, in *Swiftwater* by Annixter (1940) Bucky's father is a master woodsman and perceptive tutor though he has a drinking problem; a broken leg and, later, his shooting death put him in the background; Bucky's mother, slightly shrewish from worry, is nevertheless warm and loving. Bucky learns from them, respects them fully.

In sports books of this period, the parents are relegated to between-games conversation and advice and during-games cheering. Loyalty, pride, support are typical characteristics; the advice is generous, humane and diplomatically given.

There are exceptions, of course; my examples are chosen to emphasize my thesis. The exceptions are of two sorts, those which fit the mold but hold a more central role, a stronger very positive characterization as in Rawling's *The Yearling* (1938), and those which introduce parents, usually fathers, who are overly stern or rigid as in O'Hara's *My Friend Flicka* (1941), or possessed of a blind drive that blocks rapport or understanding as in Carson's *The Coach Nobody Liked* (1960). As with the previously described books featuring girls, these books conclude with these misunder-

standings diminished if not erased with both parent and adolescent understanding and accepting the other. All's well that ends well.

We see in these books, parents behaving in relatively stable and predictable ways. They formulate an image against which readers might have measured their own parents, if they noticed these two-dimensional figures at all. Suggestive is the cumulative sense of detachment and, beyond this, an impression that any differences are resolved; parental insight and values are recognized. This despite the fact that often enough these feelings and ideas were not focal to the books' development.

In current books parents are still more often than not off-stage or minor characters. Yet their impact on the developments is both greater and different for often the issues or problems evolve from them. Different, too, is their image.

Parents are seen as indifferent to their children. The presentations range from mere distance to parental egocentricism. In *Bless the Beasts and Children* (Swarthout, 1970) each of the boys suffers from a form of parental self-centeredness and neglect, and it is clear that the boys' rather severe problems emanate from this neglect. They are sent to the camp as much to get them out of the way as anything else. Certainly Dinky Hocker in *Dinky Hocker Shoots Smack* (Kerr, 1970) is in part a victim of her parents' inattention to her needs. Her mother virtually ignores her except to be critical while giving her energy and time to helping drug addicts, an implication being that she seeks public approval. The divorced mother in *No Easy Circle* (Naylor, 1972) comes off somewhat better; she is naggishly concerned about her daughter but is so caught up in her own needs and problems that she really doesn't see beyond them. But the dubious height of indifference is displayed in *Ox* (Ney, 1972). The hero is left in the care of servants while his wealthy, self-oriented parents party, sleep off the after effects, or travel to exotic places. Ox sees them rarely, though he does occasionally get to help carry his father into the house from the lawn where he'd drunkenly fallen asleep.

Cruelty and abuse follow on the heels of indifference. This is selfishness to an extreme. The hero's mother in *I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth The Trip* (Donovan, 1969) is an alcoholic who is out of control; she alternately slobbers or rages at her son so that he becomes disoriented. This woman, however, seems a saint compared to the one in *The Boy Who Could Make Himself Disappear* (Platt, 1968): she goes quite a way beyond berating her son as a burden. Callous and mean, she abuses him physically, ignoring his physical needs; she shows so little concern for him emotionally or physically that when he loses contact with reality and is lost for two days, she not only disregards his absence but also, later, tells the hospital to keep him for a few days so she can take a vacation. There is no question as expressed in these texts but that the problems these boys experience are directly related to this parental behavior. Similarly we see that the defensive cynicism of Kirk in *The Three Legged Race* (Crawford, 1974), a trait that really impairs his healthy functioning, is caused by his destructive, hypocritical parents who express their love for him by sending him away. And in tracing the history of the heroine of *A Wild Thing* (Renvoise, 1971), we learn of paternal desertion and extreme maternal neglect, along with a series of unsympathetic foster homes.

In some instances, parents are merely blind. This posture, while less negative, nevertheless suggests their fallibility, their culpability to the reader. In *Lisa, Bright and Dark* (Neufeld, 1969) it is Lisa's friends who recognize her fragile mental health and attempt to assist her. Her parents

blithely but continuously, despite pleas and warnings, reject suggestions that Lisa is struggling to stave off a breakdown. They are seen as too busy, too status seeking, too cold and sophisticated. Similarly the parents in *Tuned Out* (Wojciechowska, 1968) are inexplicably unaware of their son's drug habit, though it is abundantly evident to his younger brother. One wonders how they could not notice some peculiarity of behavior.

Other parents are seen as misguided or misguiding. The heroine of *Songs My Mother Taught Me* (Thomas, 1973) grows up feeling humiliated and desolate in a home devoid of love. Her parents bicker constantly. Her mother shrewishly belittles her father until he retreats into a milquetoast personality. The mother nags her daughters and puts on airs in an attempt to gain status in the community. In *I'm Really Dragged But Nothing Gets Me Down* (Hentoff, 1968) we view a father who compromises his values for money and security. The estrangement between him and his son is based on this conflict of values and politics as well as an inability for them to communicate and comprehend one another. The heroines of both *My Darling My Hamburger* (Zindel, 1969) and *Bonnie Jo, Go Home* (Eyerly, 1973) become pregnant. One factor, it appears, in this development is conflict with parents who fail to give affectionate guidance and support. In addition to having a busy social schedule, each mother needs to consider and respond to her new husband; he, harsh and accusing, expresses distrust if not disapproval of his stepdaughter. The impression given is that the girls rebelliously seek affection elsewhere. In the Zindel book the young father-to-be, feeling responsible, seeks advice from his father. This adult sees nothing wrong with his son's playing around but advises him not to get caught; talking of considerations for the future, he specifically rejects his son's acceptance of responsibility.

There are exceptions to these portrayals: *A Day No Pig Would Die* (Peck, 1972), which, however, is set in the past; *The Peter Pan Bag* (Kingman, 1970), *If I Love You, Am I Trapped Forever,* (Kerr, 1973) though the honest, helpful mother is offset by a father who has deserted her. Some other books, such as *Dinky Hocker Shoots Smack, The Three-Legged Race* and *My Darling, My Hamburger* build in a second set of parents who represent positive characteristics as a comparison to the others (sometimes too obviously, as in the last title); their children don't get into the difficulties or face the emotional turmoil of their counterparts, a fact which further expresses the cause-effect relationship suggested in these texts: problem parents lead to troubled children.

The togetherness parents of yesteryear seem in retrospect to have been made of cotton candy, created in a time of innocence. Their depiction reflects the romantic elements of those stories, if not a hall-of-mirrors type fantasy. But the image reflected today with its catalog of offensive traits borders on the grotesque. It is not unlikely that individual homes and situations like those found in individual novels could exist. However, the preoccupation with negative characteristics and destructive interrelationships so as to give the impression that only these exist is as lopsided as the earlier image.

A basic question: what are the natural readers doing with the new image? Ignoring it? Developing a frame of reference, unconsciously perhaps, with regard to adult behavior and attitudes that dissolves the potential for compassion, affection and mutual understanding? Identification of this sort might lead to further alienation and denial of adult models. Perhaps, however, to see a brighter side, they are measuring their own parents against those in books and finding them not wanting.

SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CONTEMPORARY NOVEL FOR ADOLESCENTS

VIRGINIA L. WOLF
University of Wisconsin — Stout, Menomonie

The contemporary adolescent novel is overwhelmingly a heterosexual genre. Same-sex relationships of any kind, even friendships, are less fully and frequently portrayed than are a boy and girl's dating, going steady, and experimenting with sex. There are only six novels which in any way deal with homosexuality and lesbianism. These are John Donovan's *I'll Get There, But It Better Be Worth the Trip* (Harper & Row, 1969), Isabelle Holland's *The Man Without a Face* (Harper & Row, 1972), Lynn Hall's *Sticks and Stones* (Follett, 1972), Sandra Scoppetone's *Trying Hard to Hear You* (Harper & Row, 1974), Rosa Guy's *Ruby* (Viking, 1976), and M. E. Kerr's *I ll Love You When You're More Like Me* (Harper & Row, 1977).[1]

In two of these novels, Donovan's and Holland's, a relationship between two males results in one, vaguely described, sexual encounter -- never to be repeated. In Hall's *Sticks and Stones,* Tom and Ward's relationship never becomes sexual. Jeff and Phil admit to being gay, but rather than portray their relationship, *Trying Hard to Hear You* is told from an outsider's point of view -- told in Camilla's words as she tries to understand the way in which she and her friends reacted to Jeff and Phil. Rosa Guy's *Ruby* is told from an insider's point of view. The reader shares Ruby's perspective of her gay relationship with Daphne. But at the end of the novel, her relationship with Daphne having ended, Ruby turns to Orlando. She does not choose to be a lesbian, and indeed the novel never suggests that she is. On the contrary, the novel emphasizes that Ruby is a girl desperate for love from anyone who is willing to love her. Finally, in the latest book, *I'll Love You When You're More Like Me,* Charlie Gilhooley is not the protagonist, and although he "comes out" at sixteen, he is never involved in a gay relationship during the course of the novel.

In considering these novels, therefore, the first thing I want to emphasize is that gay males and lesbians (especially lesbians) are virtually invisible in the contemporary adolescent novel. Further, although these novels may deal with same-sex relationships, they are not about gay ones. Homosexuality is a subject of these novels only in that it is a problem which the novels in some way raise and attempt to resolve. Gay individuals and homosexuality are a concern of these novels only because they present the non-gay adolescent with a problem. In other words, these novels are designed to educate the non-gay adolescent. When it is estimated that over two million adolescents have had one or more homosexual experiences and over eight hundred thousand of these relationships have been between females,[2] such a small number of novels addressing this kind of experience seems woefully inadequate.

Secondly, I want to point out that those images of gay individuals which do exist are presented by heterosexuals. There are no adolescent novels told from a lesbian's or a gay male's point of view. Critics desiring to eliminate racism and sexism have demanded that novels offer black, native American, Jewish, Chicano, and feminist perspectives. But there is no gay perspective in adolescent novels and, as of yet, very little demand for one.[3] The consequence, of course, has been images of lesbians and gay males which are superficial and stereotypical -- which brings me to my

third point. There are no fully developed and complex characterizations of gay individuals in the contemporary adolescent novel.

Gay males in these novels, Ward in *Sticks and Stones*, Justin in *The Man Without a Face*, Phil and Jeff in *Trying Hard to Hear You*, and Charles in *I'll Love You When You're More Like Me*, are neither fully characterized nor free of stereotypes. We see them mostly from someone else's point of view and thus know their feelings and thoughts only when they verbalize them. Furthermore, although none of them is outrageously stereotyped, they are portrayed in accordance with the notion that gay males are all pretty much alike. Their sensitivity, gentleness, and compassion are stressed. All of them are involved in the arts, and all are very concerned about the quality of human relationships. None of them is an ostentatious "queen," fully imitating what is traditionally considered feminine dress and behavior, but, then, neither is one of them an athlete or in any way so masculine in the traditional sense of the word that he offsets the stereotypical notion that a gay male is always more feminine than masculine.

Similarly, Daphne in *Ruby*, the only character who might be considered a bonafide lesbian, is an insensitive, aggressive, intelligent, tough, and independent young woman. She plans on escaping from Harlem, on going to one of the best colleges, and on doing anything she can to be powerful in her world -- no matter what the cost. She is not a loud "dyke," fully imitating what is traditionally considered masculine behavior, but then neither is she a potential homemaker or mother. She, too, is largely portrayed in accordance with the stereotype that all homosexuals are bent on trying to be members of the opposite sex. I do not mean to imply that these characters are not positive and probable images of gay individuals who exist in contemporary society but rather that we need more, other, and fuller images so that the adolescent might learn that not all gay males or all lesbians are alike -- that they are in fact as various as any other group of people.

In any case, this stereotypical aspect of characterization is less bothersome than that the families of gay individuals in these novels reflect stereotypical thinking about the families of homosexuals. More specifically, they reflect those increasingly criticized psychological theories that the homosexual comes from a bad family situation. Most of the characters in these novels have destructive relationships with one or more of their parents. There are five sets of divorced parents, three dead ones, and three who are alcoholics in six novels! Thankfully, the novels do not consistently reinforce the theory that a poor relationship with the parent of the opposite sex results in homosexuality or the contrary theory that a poor relationship with the parent of the same sex does. But obviously all of them do rather strongly imply that an unhappy or unstable home life is largely responsible for an adolescent's encounter with or involvement in homosexuality. All of the characters who have any kind of homosexual experience -- or even the inclination to do so -- are to some extent lonely and unhappy. Some of them are desperately obsessed with the need for affection and companionship.

Thus, before their contact with homosexuality, they are -- to use the jargon -- "poorly adjusted." But they are even more so afterwards. In fact, a variety of disasters reinforces the myth that homosexuals are not and cannot be happy or well-adjusted. The plots of the novels include four car crashes resulting in a mutilated face, an injured head, and five deaths. In addition, there is one heart attack, one attempted suicide, and abundant if less easily classified other kinds of suffering. Not one of the novels ends with a gay relationship intact. Only the ending of *Sticks and Stones* holds out any hope that a gay relationship may allow both parties

to be happy, and that hope is fairly minimal. Ward and Tom are once again friends, but they have never been lovers. Tom has overcome much of the self-doubt and self-destructiveness provoked by the gossip about him and Ward. But as the novel ends and Tom thinks, "there's probably nothing wrong with my masculinity" (p. 187), he still seems to need to deny that he is or ever will be gay.

The overwhelming image one gets of the gay individual is that of a person who suffers because he or she is different. The reader may very well infer from these novels that being involved in a gay relationship is always painful and that the only way to end this pain is to terminate or change the relationship. A sexual relationship between persons of the same sex, these novels imply, is, first of all, always subject to extreme social pressure and disapproval; is, secondly, very difficult to begin and maintain; is, in the third place, usually loaded with self-doubt and self-destructiveness for one or both of those involved; and is, finally, often more transitory and insignificant than the individuals involved realize. In all of their melodrama, they imply that death and disaster are frequently the results of homosexuality. Obviously, this is not a positive image of gay experience. These books do not provide adequate role models or support for those young people who have chosen or are considering a gay lifestyle.

But then merely to criticize these novels for their failures is to ignore their accomplishments. It is to want them to be something other than what they are. Furthermore, it is to stress their faults as unique rather than as characteristic of the genre to which they belong. It is now a commonplace that contemporary adolescent novels are problem novels, focusing on one or more current social issues, breaking taboos, and embodying new if sometimes superficial attitudes toward the issues they raise. The genre is not only issue-oriented; it is also severely limited because each novel relies so fully upon an adolescent point of view. These adolescent narrators are realistically bound by their lack of knowledge, experience, and understanding. Therefore, attitudes toward complex issues tend to be superficial and stereotypical. Furthermore, I think there is a close connection between the genre's limited viewpoint and its outrageous reliance upon melodrama. I don't mean that melodrama results because adolescents are notoriously melodramatic -- although most of them most certainly are -- but rather that it may be because the adolescent is an inadequate vehicle for authoritative interpretation, that the authors of these novels so often turn to emotionally manipulative, often violent action to get their points across. In any case, the contemporary adolescent novel is by and large a limited, melodramatic, issues-oriented genre. It is to be credited for breaking taboos and for attempting to "tell it like it is," but faulted for its superficiality and for its tendency to become soap opera.

Placing the six novels I've discussed in the proper context, seeing them as members of this genre, we can more fairly evaluate them. We can see them for what they are even as we wish for adolescent novels which accomplish more than they do. Although they do not offer gay perspective, they do lay a groundwork for future openness and honesty about homosexuality in the adolescent novel. Even among the six, I notice a progression from Donovan's book in 1969 to Kerr's in 1977, a progression which involves more description of physical affection between persons of the same sex and more acceptance of gay individuals and of homosexuality. One can hope that on the foundation which these novels have laid, novels with gay perspective will one day be written and published. In any case, these six deserve credit for breaking a taboo.

But they deserve even more credit -- lots of it -- because of the

sympathy with which they treat homosexuality and gay individuals. Even though they are limited and stereotypical in their characterizations, they do not portray homosexuality as a crime or gay individuals as ridiculous or monstrous. Ward, Justin, and all the rest are people -- human beings who, in spite of their troubles and weaknesses, are basically good and lovable and who deserve respect and understanding.

These novels deserve our approval for one more accomplishment. If they do not provide young gays with adequate role models and support, they do appeal to the humanistic impulses of non-gay readers. They are social tracts, protesting fear of and prejudice against homosexuality. Thus, if they stress, with great melodrama, the sad plight of the gay individual, they also show that bigotry and homophobia are responsible for his or her loneliness and suffering.

Sticks and Stones and *Trying Hard to Hear You* deal primarily with the horror and cruelty of homophobia. Tom, Ward, Jeff, and Phil suffer enormously as a result of others' rejection, fear, and hatred of homosexuality. Tom and Phil suffer even more because they are less sure of and less comfortable with themselves than are Ward and Jeff. Tom nearly kills himself in response to his self-doubt and his partially self-imposed isolation. Phil, unable to choose to be gay openly and proudly, claims that he could be heterosexual, accepts a challenge to prove his masculinity with a girl, gets drunk, wrecks the car, and kills both himself and Penny. Both Tom and Phil are clearly the victims of homophobia -- both of homophobia in the external world and of that which they have internalized.

Ward and Jeff, on the other hand, are not ashamed of their sexual preference. Both are articulate spokesmen for the right to be gay. Jeff denies that he and Phil hurt or are likely to hurt anyone because they are gay. He asks Camilla, "as long as people love instead of hate, what difference does it make who they love?" (p. 170). And, Ward is equally eloquent. When he finally tells Tom that he is gay, he says, "Tom, I believe very firmly that any genuine love is a good and necessary thing, whether it comes from a man, woman, child, pet, or whatever. I believe that every individual should try to find that *kind* of love that fills his needs, no matter what society says" (p. 158).

Although homosexuality is only a minor concern of *I'll Love You When You're More Like Me,* Kerr does deal with the stigma society places on the gay individual. After Charlie lets it be known that he's gay, many of his high school companions and the citizens of his hometown go out of their way either to isolate or taunt him. And, his father breaks his nose. As his close friend, Wally Witherspoon says, "honesty has its own rewards: ostracism and disgrace" (p. 38). Wally's comment reveals how the tone of this novel differs from that of the other five. Kerr treats Charlie's situation with humor just as Charlie does. Rather than write soap opera, Kerr teasingly uses the same ingredients -- but mixes them with a large dose of irony. Thus, rather than being allowed to cry over Charlie, the reader is forced to laugh with him, especially at the end of the novel when he has the last laugh on his worst tormenter, Deke Slade. Obviously, Charlie is more like Ward and Jeff than he is like Tom and Phil. But he is different from all four. He is not guilty about his sexual preference, but neither is he a dedicated defender of or spokesman for homosexuality. But, then, he doesn't need to be because Kerr doesn't confront him with such overwhelming rejection and cruelty. Perhaps even more important, neither does she provide him with a male lover or with anyone who might possibly become one.

Unlike Hall's, Scoppetone's, and Kerr's novels, *I'll Get There* and

The Man Without a Face do not deal with bigotry -- or do so only in the sense that Davy and Charles have internalized homophobia. Homosexuality is not really central to either of these novels. Both are much more concerned with a male adolescent's need for male friendship and affection in a world where most of his relationships are with females and are, to say the least, self-destructive. Each boy has, I think, one sexual encounter with a male. I am hesitant to be more definite because each experience is so vaguely described. Both boys are extremely guilty and fearful afterwards. Charles runs away from Justin, and Davy picks a fight with Altschuler and is more than half-convinced that his dog was killed by a car because of what they did. Eventually both Davy and Charles accept that their one homosexual experience was normal and does not prove that they are "queer."

Although both novels try to address the feelings of adolescents who have had similar experiences and to reassure them that they are normal, obviously neither novel is very positive about on-going, gay relationships. Davy and Altschuler are friends by the end of the novel, having talked over "that night" and agreed that "the important thing is not to do it again" (p. 188). Similarly, Charles is finally able to acknowledge his love for Justin. But before Charles gets a chance to see him again, Holland conveniently kills Justin off so that the reader never has to deal with what might have been.

The absence of homophobia in *Ruby* is an interesting phenomenon. It may merely reflect the lack of seriousness with which some view lesbian relationships between adolescents. Like *I'll Get There* and *The Man Without a Face, Ruby* may be meant to imply that adolescent homosexuality is only transitory -- only a phase. Certainly, the *Library Journal* reviewer seemed to think so, identifying the novel as the usual young adult novel "cop-out."[4] On the other hand, the *School Library Journal* reviewer judges *Ruby* an exceptional and unacceptable adolescent novel.[5] This reviewer condemns the novel because the sexual scenes "leave too little to the imagination" and because Rosa Guy "doesn't deal with the stigma of homosexuality" (82).

This last review of *Ruby* provides a fitting introduction to the last thing I want to say about these six novels. These novels are to be praised not only for introducing the subject of homosexuality, not only for portraying gay individuals with sympathy and dignity, and not only for trying to combat bigotry and homophobia. They are also to be praised for going as far as the publishers, critics, and public will allow. *Ruby* crossed the line into unacceptable territory and has not been as well-received[6] as was Rosa Guy's ALA Notable Book, *The Friends*. Lynn Hall's *Sticks and Stones* ends as it does because her publishers would not let her end it as she wished. In her words,

> "I wanted Tom and Ward to love each other, to live happily after, and that was the way I ended it. But the publishers would not let me do it. In their words, this was showing a homosexual relationship as a possible happy ending and this might be dangerous to young people teetering on the brink. One editor wanted me to kill Tom in a car accident. [!] At least I held out for a friendship at the end, one which might or might not develop into something more, depending on the reader's imagination."[7]

We have all heard time and again that unless we want to guarantee that our children and adolescents grow up in, be hurt by, and perpetuate a bigoted, destructive culture, we must give them understanding, tolerance, and appreciation of human differences. As teachers, critics, and parents, we cannot therefore rest content with the images of gay individuals provided by these six adolescent novels. They do not satisfy the needs of even the non-gay adolescent for understanding and appreciation of what it means to be gay. All adolescents, gay or not, need novels which offer gay

perspective and novels which fully and positively portray gay individuals and gay relationships. Only such novels will serve to combat the homophobia so deeply ingrained in our culture.

NOTES

[1]Hereafter cited parenthetically.

[2]See Robert C. Sorenson, *Adolescent Sexuality in Contemporary America* (New York: World Publishing, 1973), pp. 283-295.

[3]One recent request for gay perspective is that made by Frances Hanckel and John Cunningham in "Can Young Gays find Happiness in YA Books," *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 50 (March, 1976), pp. 528-534.

[4]*Library Journal*, 101 (September 15, 1976), 1882.

[5]*School Library Journal*, 22 (May, 1976), 82.

[6]In addition to the two reviews already mentioned, *Ruby* received only two others, unlike all of the other novels considered which each received eight or more. Of these other two [*Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, 30 (November, 1976), 42 and *Hornbook*, 52 (December, 1976), 652], only the *Hornbook* one is positive.

[7]Hanckel and Cunningham, p. 534.

Censorship: *Continued from page 34*

More and more of this slime is piling up on the home bookshelves, and, as it sells, a certain group of publishers is making more and more tempting inducements to authors to meet the demand, and more and more writers who built their reputations upon wholesome standards, who revealed in their early writing clean and healthy minds, are falling into line to help shock this shockless age.

The college professor is being made excellent use of in the skillfully organized drive to cloak the over-sexed sex novel with respectability. Anyone who has any pretense toward intellectuality may read as he runs, or run as he reads, week after week blurb reviews by this professor and that professor, in which he is informed that the really vital modern writer is in rebellion at the old forms and standards and has nobly broken from the shackles of hypocrisy to write boldly and frankly of the unthinkable and unspeakable."

("What Children Are Reading Today," *Ladies' Home Journal*, November 1923, p. 32)

---

hailstorms

the hailstorms have begun again,
pinging against our front-room windows,
ice against glass: dissonant and threatening;
stoning field flowers and garden vegetables,
battering jagged holes in the
brittle plastic on father's greenhouse;
building a fist with the wind,
beating down tall weeds along the road,
scattering crabapples about the yard,
continually beginning again and again
and the sun
can never be an end
to such beginnings

Mark Bruner (student)
University of Wisconsin-River Falls

SEVEN RECENT QUESTIONS AND SEVEN OLD ANSWERS ABOUT CENSORSHIP

KEN DONELSON
Arizona State University, Tempe

Given the mania which drives parents to brand books like *The Catcher in the Rye, A Death in the Family, The Wizard of Oz, Jonathan Livingston Seagull, In the Night Kitchen, Slaughterhouse-Five, The Chocolate War,* and *Charlotte's Web* as unfit for children, and given the censorious spirit which drove parents to tell teachers what texts or books could or could not be used in Drake, North Dakota (1973), Kanawha County, West Virginia (1974-1975), and Island Trees School District, New York (1976-1977), we should hardly be shocked by any new attacks for whatever reasons. What may be mildly surprising is the fact that attacks and attempts at censorship on books and magazines and films for young people go far back in our national history, at least to the time of Anthony Comstock, our first great national self-appointed censor and self-annointed guardian of everyone else's morals.

But Comstock was hardly alone in his desperation to set an anarchic world aright. Here are a few gleanings from the past introduced by questions which are contemporary (I've heard all of them asked within the last year). Read them and chuckle or weep.

WHAT HARM CAN ADVENTURE BOOKS LEAD TO?

"Again, these stories [dime novels] breed vulgarity, profanity, loose ideas of life, impurity of thought and deed. They render the imagination unclean, destroy domestic peace, desolate homes, cheapen woman's virtue, and make foul-mouthed bullies, cheats, vagabonds, thieves, desperadoes, and libertines. They disparage honest toil, and make real life a drudge and burden.

A few months ago, in a small town in Massachusetts, I arrested a young man about twenty-one years of age, for sending most obscene and foul matter by mail. He was in the field with his father at work at the time of arrest. He desired to go to his room to change his apparel before going to court. While in his room, and up to the moment of the finding of a pile of these vile five-cent story-papers in one corner, he had been perfectly cool and stolid. When these were discovered, he started as though a nest of adders had been opened, and said with great feeling, 'There! that's what has cursed me! That has brought me to this!'"

(Anthony Comstock, *Traps for the Young,* ed. by Robert Bremner, Cambridge: Harvard U. Press, 1967, first published in 1883, p. 25 and pp. 28-29)

CAN ADOLESCENT LITERATURE HURT ANYONE?

"Because these cheap books [series books like *Tom Swift* and *The Rover Boys*] do not develop criminals or lead boys, except very occasionally, to seek the Wild West, parents who buy such books think they do their boys no harm. The fact is, however, that the harm done is simply incalculable. I wish I could label each one of these books: 'Explosives! Guaranteed to Blow Your Boy's Brains Out.'

One of the most valuable assets a boy has is his imagination. In proportion as this is nurtured a boy develops initiative and resourcefulness. The greatest possible service that education can render is to train the boy to grasp and master new situations as they constantly present themselves to him; and what helps more to make such adjustment than a lively imagination? Story books of the right sort stimulate and conserve this noble faculty, while those of the viler and cheaper sort, by overstimulation, debauch and vitiate, as brain and body are debauched and destroyed by strong drink."

(Franklin K. Mathiews, "Blowing Out the Boy's Brains," *Outlook,* November 18, 1914, pp. 653-654. Mathiews was the Chief Scout Librarian, Boy Scouts of America)

DO POPULAR MAGAZINES PRESENT A PROBLEM?

"The school, therefore, and parent can do much to prevent that deterioration in taste that is so apparent on all sides, and this without anything in the nature of a revolution. Parents should sternly forbid the reading of more than one magazine a month, for the indiscriminate reading of magazines is perhaps more harmful than anything else; it creates a distaste for reading anything but 'snippets' and the lightest of literature, and gives the reader an air of superficial knowledge that is far worse than downright ignorance. The spaces in the mind may be filled; it is difficult to clear away rubbish. Magazine-reading is to the mind what constant 'whiskies and sodas' are to the body; it prevents the digestion of anything solid, and the taste for it grows with what it feeds upon."

(Florence B. Low, "The Reading of the Modern Girl," *The Nineteenth Century*, February 1906, pp. 286-287)

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO REDUCE THE MAGAZINE THREAT?

". . .Representative T. Webber Wilson of Mississippi has introduced a bill to set up a national board of censors to which all proofs of magazines would be submitted before publication. It would pass on all stories, articles and pictures and publication without approval would expose the publisher to a fine of $10,000 or imprisonment not to exceed ten years. Mr. Wilson is said to have offered the bill as a result of the testimony in the notorious New York case [the Browning separation case] upon which some of the papers have run the full gamut. 'I regret,' said Mr. Wilson, as quoted in the Baltimore *Evening Sun*, 'that some of the newspapers have gone as far as they did in covering the trial, but, of course, we can not attempt to censor the press generally. We must protect the adolescents, and I feel certain that unless we set up some sort of curb, we will find much of this objectionable and filthy testimony in art magazines.'"

("The Revolt Against the Revolting," *The Literary Digest*, February 19, 1927, p.31)

SHOULD WE CENSOR MOVIES, TOO?

"The evangelist, Bob Jones, whose work takes in several states, declares that 'the moral conditions in America are chaotic.' His attack is concentrated chiefly on the moving picture. 'Unclean movies and unclean actresses and actors have about damned our young folks,' he writes. 'There ought to be a way to solve all moral problems. I believe absolutely in the strictest censorship of both pictures and actors.'"

("Censorship or Not," *The Literary Digest*, June 23, 1923, p. 27)

IS THERE PROOF THAT LITERATURE LEADS TO ANTI-SOCIAL ACTS?

"Law-enforcement agencies recognize that the sex criminal is a reader of such literature and that the imaginations of most juvenile delinquents are inflamed by pornographic publications.

Lewis E. Lawes, Warden of Sing Sing Prison, declares:

> Salacious magazines are definitely connected with the criminal activity of individuals predisposed toward sex crimes. They have had a definite effect in many cases with which I have come directly in contact.

J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, testifies:

> The publication and distribution of salacious material is a peculiarly vicious evil; the destruction of moral character caused by it among young people cannot be overestimated. The circulation of periodicals containing such material plays an important part in the development of crime among the youth of your country.

In the past de[illegible]e, the growth of salacious literature has been the most rapid in history. During thi[illegible] period sex crimes have more than doubled, with one out of every four committed by youths under twenty. The latest National Uniform Crime Reports Bulletin indicates that, while crime in general waned in the U.S. during 1939, sex offenses increased 7 per cent. Rape cases have shot up 50 per cent in the past six years."

(Courtney Ryley Cooper, "This Trash Must Go!" *Forum*, February 1940, p. 61)

AREN'T PARENTS AND TEACHERS ALREADY WORKING HARD ON THE PROBLEM?

"Parents everywhere tell you that the younger generation of today is hard-boiled and shockless, so what is the use of seeking to prevent them from reading slimy books and going to slimy plays? Negations result only in deceit. And yet it is these same parents--mothers mostly--who buy these books and bring them home. That is how nine copies out of ten fall into the hands of the children who read them. It isn't a case of the parent failing at negations. They aid and abet the appetite for sex trash. . .

Continued on page 32

BOOKS & RECORDS

FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Cianciolo, Patricia, Editorial Chair. *Adventuring with Books*. A Booklist for Pre-K-Grade 8. Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1977. (Distributed also by Scholastic/Citation Press) Paper.

This 500 page update of the 1973 edition reflects changes in the world of children's books not only with the inclusion of new titles published since 1973 but with new subdivisions categories. These are prominent in "Novels and Short Stories": "Contemporary Life," "Ethnic Groups," and "Growing Up" but also show up in others. There are 13 major sections with appropriate subheadings. Both fiction and non-fiction titles are included; all titles but "Informational Books" include a substantial annotation. A concise introductory essay offers valuable comments about traditional and atraditional literary forms for children and about trends in both the primary and intermediate level readers. This bibliography is a MUST purchase for teachers and librarians as a tool to "stimulate today's children to acquire the habit of reading" (along with the companion volumes *Your Reading* - JHS and *Books For You* - SHS).

Nicholas J. Karolides
University of Wisconsin-River Falls

Toye, William (reteller). *The Loon's Necklace*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977. Illustrations: Elizabeth Cleaver. Elementary.

Since 1950 children have enjoyed the film, *The Loon's Necklace*. Now this story, a Tsimshian legend, is told again in book form. The style of the text, although simple, seems to demand reading aloud. The illustrations, quite different from the film's visual images, are interpretive, but also representational. Movement, time, and emotion are all portrayed clearly as are the characters and setting. The book will be enjoyed by itself, as the film has been and will continue to be. However, the two provide some interesting comparisons which might be pursued by children with their teacher. Among these are differences and similarities in story emphases, in illustrative interpretations, in styles of telling, and in the possibilities of each medium. This is a welcome book, not only for its subject matter and it's simple clear text but also for the fine quality of Elizabeth Cleaver's illustrations. Many children of Wisconsin are familiar with the loon, but familiarity is not necessary for enjoyment of this book.

Bette J. Peltola
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Steig, William. *Caleb & Kate*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1977. Illustrations: William Steig. Elementary

When William Steig weaves a tale, there is magic to behold and ponder. This book is no different in that. Caleb, the woodcutter, and Kate, the weaver, love each other but, on occasion, they fight bitterly. On one such occasion, Caleb ran out into the forest, forgot why they had quarreled, and fell asleep on his way back to his beloved Kate. A witch passing by tried out the new spell she'd learned from her cousin and the sleeping Caleb awoke to find himself a dog. After running home to Kate, he could only comfort her in doglike ways as she mourned for her lost husband. With the perfection also found in *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* in the undoing of the magic, Steig brings this little tale to a close. Caleb and Kate never know what really happened. As Steig says, "Like many another thing, it remained a mystery."

The humor is less obvious in this story than in some of the others by Steig. The suspense, however, is equal as is his use of the occasional small detail that brings the story to life. And, as usual, the illustrations and the text are a perfect blend--each contributing to and supporting the other. All in all, it is a superb tale of magic, adventure, and humor.

Bette J. Peltola
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Glubok, Shirley. *The Art of Photography*. (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1977). 48 pp. Ages 8 and up.

The Art of Photography is the fifth book in Shirley Glubok's *Art of . . .* series. In this volume she traces the 150-year history of photographic art through a survey of work by several outstanding photographers.

The heart of the book is a series of photographs, arranged more or less chronologically to depict the development and refinement of techniques, and the changing modes in subject matter. The selection of photographs is excellent. Glubok has chosen single works from each artist which at once characterize and distinguish the style of the individual, giving a gratifyingly complete survey in a relatively short space. The text follows the illustrations, explaining the photographs and briefly describing the interests and motivations of the artists. Through the text, the reader's attention is directed beyond the immediate subjects of the photographs, to the balance between shapes and patterns, to contrasts between textures, and to the drama of the black-and-white print.

Several themes give the survey continuity. Technical changes in equipment (most notably the shift from old-style, long-exposure cameras to the faster, newer ones and the split-second strobes) changed the way photographers recorded their subjects. This becomes particularly clear in comparisons of pictures from the various wartime eras, or of the stately early still life by Daguerre with Dr. Edgerton's stunning "Milk Drop." Glubok also traces the evolution of photography from a tool of painters to an art in itself, discussing the dual influences that photography and painting had on so many artists. Finally, from the earliest photographs on, there is a subtle emphasis on the depiction of the ordinary, on using the camera's eye to perceive the commonplace in new ways. It is this shared quality that elevates many of the volume's photographs beyond mere recordings to the level of fine art.

Older readers may find the brief capsulizations of the various photographers unsatisfying, or even superficial. (Mann Ray, for instance, is depicted summarily as "an American painter and photographer who lived in Paris, became interested in taking pictures without a camera . . ."). Those hoping for insight into the physical and chemical aspects of photographic art will be disappointed. However, this book admirably accomplishes its purpose in presenting for young people a history of photography as an art. The choice of photographs, and the quality of the reproductions, make this an excellent picture book, and the text is fine (as a starting point at least), drawing readers into the art of photography, inviting examination.

Pamela Caplis
Wayne, New Jersey

Babbitt, Natalie. *Tuck Everlasting*. New York: Bantam, 1976. Ages 10-14 (paper).

Two threads intertwine in this enchanting story, that of the Tuck family whose members had long ago discovered and inadvertently drunk from a magic spring, achieving changelessness, life everlasting; and that of young Winnie Foster, over-protected and romantic, who discovers the Tucks and their secret. Include, too, a threatening stranger who has designs to sell the spring water to the "right" people. In this ensuing conflict, Winnie's role and choices become pivotal: should she protect the Tucks and their secret; should she drink of the spring - tempted as she is by "beautiful," forever-seventeen Jesse Tuck's proposal that she wait until she is seventeen and then join him forever - or abstain and reconcile herself to eventual death.

This tale, at once spirited and intense, lighthearted and serious, intertwines elements of fantasy with a realism and basic humanistic concerns, establishing a provocative level of thought beyond the adventure. Ms. Babbitt's skill with language is extraordinary: she creates characters we can believe and admire; she enlivens the scene with rich, well chosen details; she harmonizes the action and theme beautifully. *Tuck Everlasting* well deserves my daughter's blue-ribbon as the best book she'd read last year.

Nicholas J. Karolides
University of Wisconsin-River Falls

Mann, Peggy. *There Are Two Kinds of Terrible*. New York: Doubleday, 1977.
Lowry, Lois. *A Summer to Die*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977.

Death is an uncomfortable word in our culture. It causes some people to withdraw into themselves, others to nervously change the subject, and others to become philosophical. No simple answers exist for children's questions about it so they are frequently evaded or answered in euphemisms. Two new books attempt to move beyond these cultural responses. Central to their theme is understanding the pain and grief of death and coping with its repercussions.

There Are Two Kinds of Terrible is written from the point of view of Robert Farley, a ninth grader. The first kind of terrible he faces is a broken arm which keeps him from favorite sports and drum playing. The second, the worst kind of terrible, is the growing knowledge that his mother is going to die of cancer. Robert is not informed at first but begins to suspect due to ineffective adult cover-ups. When Robert's father finally tells him, Robert is allowed one heart rending visit with his mother at the hospital before she dies. What follows are the after-death rituals which Robert views as hypocrisies as hate, anger, fear, anguish, and grief explode in his heart.

Robert's mother had been the mainstay of his family life. He describes his father as a perfectly nice man who forgot what being a kid is like. Thus, after the funeral, Robert and his father both dwell in the house as two separate alones. It is not until Robert realizes the extent of his father's grief and begins to reach out to him that they are able to begin to cope together with the change in their lives.

A Summer to Die is also written from the point of view of the child. Thirteen year old Meg Chalmers is busy being envious of her sister's beauty and trying to sort out some of her life goals the summer her sister becomes ill with acute myelogenous leukemia. Meg witnesses the changes in the usually effervescent Molly, not realizing that death is claiming her. When Meg finally comprehends the extent of Molly's illness, she is at first angry about not being told but soon realizes that her parents had not been able to face the reality of Molly's impending death. It is through photographing the birth of a neighbor's baby that Meg is able to face herself and her own fears thus gaining the courage to visit Molly in the hospital. Gradually Meg is able to accept Molly's death and remember the good things that were part of her.

Ms. Lowry uses many naturalistic images to assist Meg and the reader in understanding the cycle of life of which death is a part. She also weaves in appropriate quotes from poetry and philosophical observations through the characters of Meg's English professor father, the seventy year old landlord, and the Harvard graduate student neighbor. The family support system is also open and strong so Meg gains support for coping.

The treatment of coping with death varies in the two books. Whereas Ms. Lowry, in *A Summer to Die,* carefully builds several support systems for Meg throughout the story, none are built for Robert in *There Are Two Kinds of Terrible.* Robert must emerge from the pain and grief of his mother's death and seek his own way of surviving - the development of a relationship with his father. Robert does not cope with death in a broad sense but rather survives this one. On the other hand, Meg not only comes to grip with Molly's death but also is able to accept death as part of the cycle of life.

Perhaps Ms. Lowry could be accused of contriving the plot by handily having a number of wise and philosophical characters available in Meg's life as well as providing Meg the opportunity to photograph the birth of a child. Contrived or not, if each of us were Meg or Robert, we would wish for such support were death to touch us. Both books are worthwhile reading for upper elementary and older children.

Mary Jett-Simpson
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Hunter, Mollie. *The Wicked One.* New York: Harper, 1977. 136 pp. Ages 9-12.

Colin Grant, a hard working farmer and woodsman in the Scottish highlands, has a fierce temper which attracts the Grollican to him. The Grollican is a monstrous creature from the Otherworld who delights in creating havoc and in watching the consequences. Colin and his family are well aware of the local lore concerning the Grollican. They know that once it chooses a victim there is no escape. But when the Grollican chooses to torment him, Colin decides to fight back.

Most of the story tells of Colin's efforts to rid himself of the ever-present monster. Each chapter presents a new adventure. But the plot is far more complex than one in which good is pitted against evil. We learn that Colin is not entirely virtuous. He falls in love with a beautiful fairy woman and his marriage is jeopardized. He knows that his fits of anger and rage only spur the Grollican on, yet he seems helpless to control himself. And the Grollican is not entirely evil. It is a lonely creature with a conscience.

Hunter has drawn on familiar folk tale elements in creating this imaginative, original story. Colin's confrontations with the Grollican are reminiscent of those of some folk tale heroes. And initially the story seems to take place in a "once upon a time and far away" setting. But Hunter sustains interest by injecting the unexpected. For example, just as we expect that Colin will match wits with the Grollican and win at last, he decides to give up and emigrate to America. Suddenly we are jolted from a fairy tale setting to the New York City harbor in the 1900's. Colin and the readers are sure that the Grollican will never appear here, but appear he does

and the New York City police and fire departments are ready to engage in the final confrontation. But again the unexpected occurs. There is no final confrontation. Instead, the Grollican and Colin establish a rather uneasy truce.

It is the well written mixture of the familiar and the unexpected which makes this a highly entertaining story. *The Wicked One* is a pleasant departure from the many hard-hitting realistic stories currently being written for upper elementary age children.

Linda Western

Haynes, Betsy. *The Ghost of the Gravestone Hearth.* New York: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1977. 128 pp. Ages 9-11.

An action-packed, humorous story about ghosts and buried treasure should add up to entertainment, and in this book it does. Charlie Potter is spending a lonely and boring summer on Long Island Sound until the ghost of Abel Blacklaw, cantankerous but not scary, appears. He tells Charlie about the treasure chest of gold coins he stole from pirates before he drowned in 1792 along with the pirates who fought him after the theft was discovered. Now, Abel wants Charlie to help in finding the treasure; Charlie is delighted to help. True to ghost story tradition, they have to dig at night, but we are forewarned that someone is watching. Sure enough, just as they dig up the treasure chest, the ghosts of the pirates appear to reclaim their loot. A wild scuffle follows with Charlie, his friend, and Abel fighting a losing battle against the crafty pirate ghosts. Quick-thinking Charlie gets the neighbor's dog to help, and the pirate ghosts are frightened off. But the treasure chest is empty except for a note from another pirate who stole, then reburied the coins years before. Dejected, Abel vanishes, but we know that Charlie will continue the treasure hunt.

Haynes tries to make her story credible. She asks us to believe in ghosts because, after all, Charlie does, and he is characterized as an imaginative but sensible child. The role of the dog is not surprising; the fact that ghosts are frightened of dogs is established early in the story. While some readers might find the logic somewhat contrived and the explanations too pat, it is hard to dislike this book. Light-hearted fantasy like this should be as important to older children's total literary fare as it is for their younger counterparts.

Linda Western
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Scoppettone, Sandra. *The Late Great Me.* New York: Bantam. 1976. 249 pp. Grades 7-12.

Geri Peters is sixteen, artistic, sensitive - and an alcoholic. Her first person account, narrated after six months of sobriety, traces her initiation into the "Juicer" subculture at Whitman High School. Under pressure from her mother to achieve "all-round" popularity and to be "somebody" Geri is introduced to alcohol by Dave Townsend, the handsome newcomer who is her first date. Geri discovers that with alcohol she can dance, joke, and converse freely - all those things she equates with "Being Great" and couldn't do before.

The reader accompanies Geri through a series of hangovers and booze parties, watching as she conceals scotch in Coke cans to drink at home and at school; smashes a room full of furniture during a drunken rampage; and finally wakes up bruised, sick and alone in a strange town after blacking out. Coupled with the lies, self-recriminations, physical and personality changes which ensue, these episodes vividly portray what has become the fastest-growing problem among teenagers.

Characterization is mixed. Geri is sensitively portrayed as a girl losing self-control. Mrs. Peters suffers a mental breakdown and emerges as a prominent character without overshadowing her daughter. Geri's father and brother are sketchily-drawn, appearing weak and self-absorbed. The savior is Kate Laine, Geri's teacher and a reformed alcoholic. Under her guidance Geri begins the struggle to regain sobriety.

The book's weakness is its failure to firmly establish credibility of situation. Even the less sophisticated reader must wonder at the repeated success of Geri's ruses and the naivete or insensitivity of her family, friends and teachers which allows her drinking to go undetected for many months.

No value judgments or simple solutions are offered. The book does end on an optimistic note as Geri learns to cope with her problem: "After that experience [beginning detoxification treatment] I went back to school knowing that the Great Me was dead - the Late Great Me. Now it was just Me. And that was enough." The voice of Geri Peters is authentic and should be heard. She does not preach, but presents the facts of alcohol abuse in a straightforward manner which should impress both teenagers and adults.

Susan Steiner
University of Wisconsin-River Falls

Zindel. *Pardon Me, You're Stepping on my Eyeball!* New York: Bantam, 1977 (paper). Ages 13 and up.

According to his alcoholic mother, 15 year old "Marsh" Mellow is either a "sneak, a pothead, or a sex maniac" while Marsh characterizes himself as a "specialized liar." And that he is. In his efforts to interact with people, he can only lie and has no relationships until he meets Edna Shinglebox whom he decides is as "freaky and depressed" as he is. Edna, plagued by nagging parents who worry that they've failed since she has no boyfriend, becomes entangled in Marsh's stories and his life and finally decides to help him in his effort to rescue his father from a mental institution. Through a series of bizarre events - a fortune teller, a fiery party in a glass house, and a secret trip - Edna helps Marsh to deal with the painful truth about his father.

Zindel has borrowed elements from his earlier novel, *The Pigman* -- a lying hero, adults portrayed as emotional cripples with hang-ups sexual and otherwise, and teenage outcasts who try to outwit them. But where there was empathy and a realistic working out of problems, as well as a thoughtful theme, in *The Pigman*, this novel fails. Its superficial theme may be the result of shallow characterization or of a thin plot or of its frenetic dialogue; it all adds up to unbelievable. Some readers will enjoy the slick, zany dialogue with its irreverence for just about everything and the "far out" scenes both at school and at home. Others will wish for a bit more depth and realism.

Mary Meiser
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Three by John Gardner:

Dragon, Dragon and Other Tales. Illustrated by Charles Shields. Knopf 1975 73pp.
Gudgekin the Thistle Girl and Other Tales. Illus. by Michael Sporn. Knopf 1976. 59 pp.
In the Suicide Mountains. Illus. by Joe Servello. Knopf, 1977. 158 pp.

John Gardner is a remarkably versatile, talented writer. A respected medievalist whose biography of Chaucer recently enjoyed considerable popular success, he is also a prolific novelist whose best work--*Grendel, The Sunlight Dialogues, October Light*--is best described in pairs of contrary-sounding statements. It is quirky, formally inventive, sometimes topical, yet thematically atavistic. It is comical but profoundly sad. It is thoughtful--at times extensively ratiocinative--but always finely realized as fiction. It marks him as one who might be expected to try his hand at stories for children. Other writers similarly inclined--think for example of C. S. Lewis, E. B. White, Isaac Bashevis Singer--have done just that, perhaps in consequence of a sense that some of their best coin has little currency in the adult world.

Dragon, Dragon and *Gudgekin* are collections of Gardner's fairy tales, four in each book. The tales are traditional in form--set, typically in "a certain kingdom," peopled mainly by simple types (a befuddled king, an evil stepmother), premised on a single problem (a dragon must be slain, the terrible Shape Shifters must be subdued). Conventional solutions to the problem are tried out (a brave army attacks a Griffin), but they fail (the Griffin eats the brave army). Peculiar measures or measures accidentally employed turn out to work far better. Heroes and heroines prevail, but by virtue of stubbornness and idiosyncrasy, not bravery or prowess. The tone throughout is light and irreverent. Children ten and older are the likely reading audience, but younger children might well enjoy hearing the tales.

In the Suicide Mountains tells of Chudu, Armida, and Prince Christopher the Sullen. Chudu is an ugly dwarf with an unwarranted reputation for evil. He is capable of black magic, but he has no wish to harm anybody. The contempt in which people hold him does affect him, however, and he begins to contemplate doing foul deeds of the sort people attribute to him. But that temptation disgusts him, and he strikes out for the Suicide Mountains to destroy himself. There he meets Armida, a beautiful young girl who is strong and clever. Armida's wicked stepmother has badgered her into believing that young ladies must be weak and foolish, and Armida, to her disgust, has acquiesced in that lesson. She too is bent on suicide. Chudu falls in love with her, and she in turn falls in love with Christopher the Sullen, a prince who loves music and poetry, hates horses and quests, and is, accordingly, also going forth to the Mountains to kill himself. All three travel together and encounter an Abbot who forestalls their suicidal plans by telling them stories and by giving them a worthwhile job of work to do. He does this, however, only because *he* wants to kill them. He is really the Six-Fingered man, and he has murdered the real Abbot and taken his place; he even has acquired power to heal the sick, in imitation of the dead Abbot. Thus

the tale is one of the power of lies and fictions. These fictions may teach people to accept a false and destructive view of themselves, but a false view may have advantages of its own, as it did at least momentarily for the false Abbot. All ends happily.

The tale is exceptionally well written but in places obscure. Good high school teachers could make it accessible to eleventh and twelfth graders.

Richard D. Western
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Gold, Robert S. *The Roar of the Sneakers*. New York; Bantam, 1977. Ages: SHS

This anthology contains 14 short stories and seven portions of novels. Authors represented include John Updike, John Cheever, Roger Angell, Irwin Shaw, and Don De Lillo. Eight different sports are represented, ranging from track and billiards (one each) to football (five). The selections range in length from three to 39 pages, and they average about 14 pages. Fifteen of the pieces have copyright dates from the 1960's or 1970's. There is very little editorial apparatus--a two-page general introduction and a paragraph preceding each piece. The type is fairly large.

The selections emphasize theme, character, and point of view, although there are two short stories in which symbolism is the predominant element. Roger Angell's "Tennis," a *New Yorker* story, could serve as useful classroom example of a story in which theme is the dominant element. The story centers around the competition on the tennis courts between a father and his college-age son. It is a flashback narrated by the son about a year after a heart attack has forced his father, who has been an excellent player for many years, to give up tennis. The son both admires and is jealous of his father's ability, and he recalls a number of incidents which vividly illustrate his ambivalence. Even more difficult for the son to deal with emotionally is his growing recognition that age inexorably erodes skill.

A rather wide range of reading difficulty is represented. Four of the short stories first appeared in the *New Yorker* and two were originally published in *New American Review*. Most of the items could be used in senior high school, though some selections contain language and/or sex scenes which will be too graphic for some school situations.

Winners and Losers, L. M. Schulman (ed.), Collier Paperback 1968, $1.25, is a similar anthology (12 selections) which features a more elementary and less controversial assortment of fictional material about athletics. Most secondary school teachers would probably prefer it to Gold's anthology.

Richard McNamara
University of Wisconsin-River Falls

Kotzwinkle, William. *Doctor Rat*. NYC, N.Y.: Bantam Books, 1977. pp. 215. Grades11-12

Doctor Rat is a savage novel that all but gouges eyes and bites ears. What author Kotzwinkle hath whelped is a madly galloping series of short episodes depicting nature in revolt against the excessive abuses of humankind. Doctor Rat, the book's main character, is an inmate of an animal experimentation laboratory, and although his fellow rodents are seething with rebellion, and he himself has been horrendously tortured, Doctor Rat hopes to preserve the oppressive status quo by defending his human captors. It is worth noting that Doctor Rat is hopelessly insane.

In contrast to the good Doctor's first person narration are alternating chapters narrated from the revolutionaries' point of view, featuring among others: King Eagle, Amoo the Great White Whale, Limping Bull Elephant, Mossy Sloth, and his relative, Surpassing Sloth. The rebels' prime objective is to summon together all animals in an effort to meet and reunify the living world in peace. Only one creature fails to understand the summons -- man.

For the most part, this book is intentionally brutal; the mutilations, sexual lasciviousness, and barbaric perpetrations of twisted minds, are all intensely vivid. Severed heads, burnt kittens, and sodomy, are all integral stock in this story. And yet, the book is considerably lightened by occasional frivolity and ridiculous rascality, and is at times, made beautiful by tender stirring moments; by old wrinkled elephants hungry for plums; by the emotions of confused animals victimized by man's final atrocity.

Although Kotzwinkle achieves the unusual by synthesizing the compassionate sensitivity of Doctor Doolittle with the warped skulduggery of Doctor Frankenstein, his novel, *Doctor Rat*, poses interesting questions, demands thought, and should be a source of enjoyment for socially mature, environmentally alert 11th and 12th grade readers.

Mark Bruner (student)
University of Wisconsin-River Falls